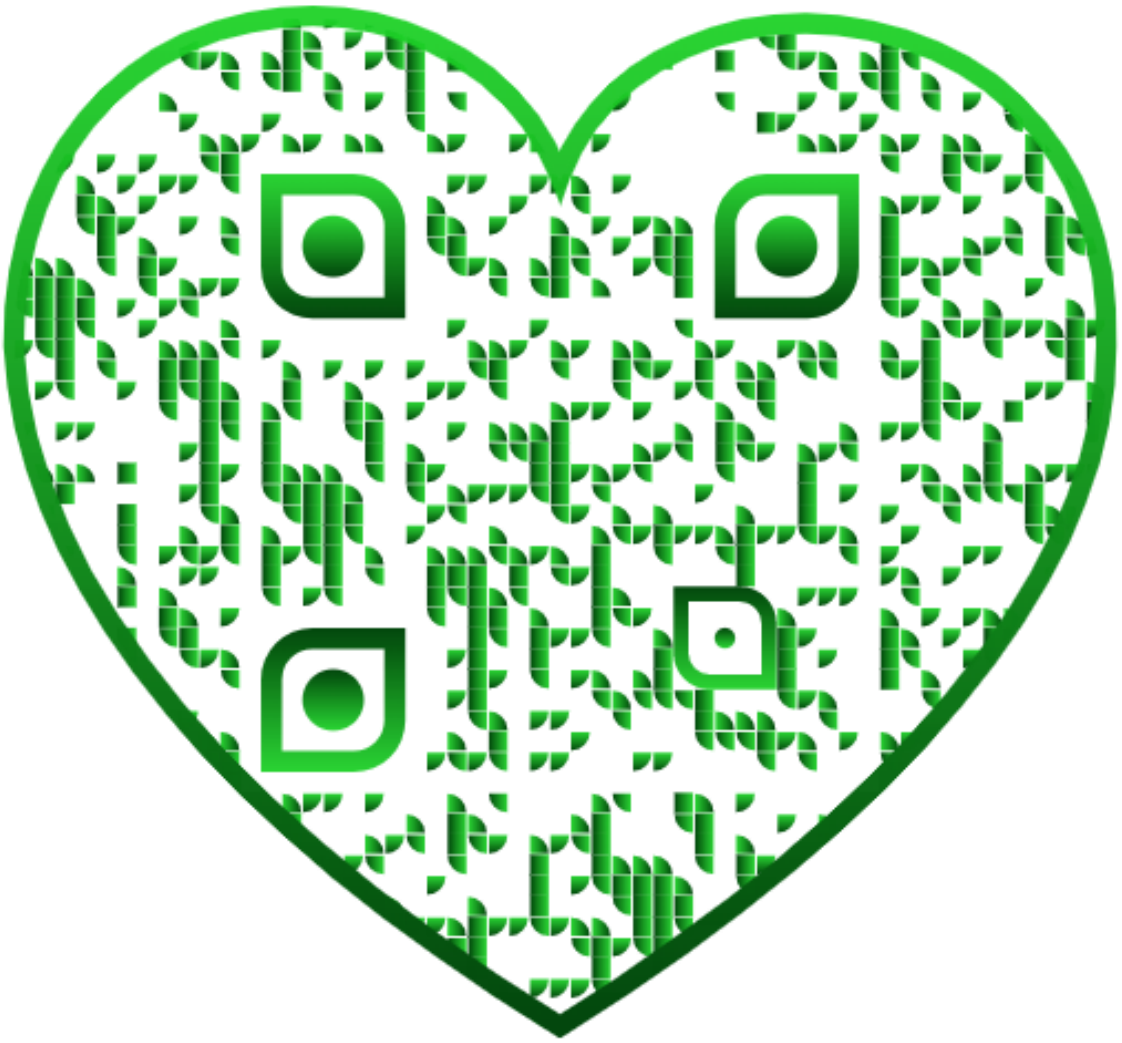
A Field Guide to Megalithic and Other Prehistoric Sites

The Old Stones OF WALES

The Megalithic Portal

Edited by Andy Burnham



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There are many hundreds of fascinating prehistoric sites in Wales, in some of the most beautiful locations in Britain, from mountaintop settings, such as at Bryn Cader Faner, to headlands with all-round sea views, as at Coetan Arthur, or on truly remote moorland, as at Bannau Sir Gaer.

The road links between North and South Wales are not that great, so it's probably best to choose one or the other as a destination unless you are up for a lot of motoring. In North Wales, Anglesey has a particularly dense concentration of megalithic sites, with many in Gwynedd and Conwy to visit on the way. South Wales stretches from Monmouthshire to Pembrokeshire, where there is the biggest and best variety of sites, including the iconic Pentre Ifan with its capstone apparently delicately floating over its three massive uprights.

The Old Stones of Wales is part of a series covering the megalithic and other prehistoric sites of Britain and Ireland. The series is published together as *The Old Stones: A Field Guide to the Megalithic Sites of Britain and Ireland*, available as a book and an ebook.

Contents

Editor's Introduction

Isle of Man

Wales

Translating Welsh Place Names
Simon Charlesworth & Stephen Rule

Bancbryn Stone Row
Sandy Gerrard

A Phenomenological Approach to Dolmens
Vicki Cummings

Stonehenge and the Glacial Transport Theory
Brian John

Healing Stones? The Preseli Bluestones
Julie Kearney

Bringing the Neolithic Back to Life
Martyn Copcutt

Colour in the Monuments of Neolithic Europe
Penelope Foreman

Editor’s Introduction

Andy Burnham, founder and Editor of the Megalithic Portal

This is the first book written by and for prehistoric site enthusiasts. It is a truly collaborative project – just like the Megalithic Portal website itself – that brings together photographs, site information, theories and expertise from the thousands of people that use and post on the site. Focusing on sites from the Neolithic and Bronze Age, this is the most comprehensive guide ever created to the best ancient places to visit in Britain and Ireland, offering an up-to-date look at the archaeology, including many extraordinary discoveries and theories that have been featured on the pages of the Megalithic Portal over the years, as well as a taster of the more mysterious side of things.

Just as the Portal is a collaborative effort, so no one person’s ideas or theories are given more weight in this book. Instead, we celebrate the advances in archaeological practice, theory, dating and analysis that have taken place in the last 25 years. Geophysics, excavation and dating techniques have progressed in this time. There has also been an increased recognition of the importance of accepting non-academic viewpoints, whether from schoolchildren, community volunteers or some of the more leftfield theorists. Alternative ways of exploring and appreciating sites and wider landscapes – previously the realm of a radical fringe – have filtered into the mainstream. Landscape archaeology has in many cases accepted – if not wholeheartedly embraced – phenomenology and multi-sensory approaches, which anyone can try with an open mind and a bit of practice. Advances in technology offer new ways of experiencing sites, for example through augmented reality that merges GIS (geographical information system) landscape models with 3D reconstructions of structures.

Recently, I've been rereading early 1990s editions of *3rd Stone* magazine, styled “for the new antiquarian”, the realm of ley hunters and earth mysteries researchers. Have we moved on in 25 years? Ideas of alignments between sites, of stone shapes matching the landscape, of the importance of colour, sound and experiencing sites in different frames of mind have filtered through to theoretical archaeology, to be discussed openly in papers and at conferences – even if they don’t always get past the gatekeepers of archaeology books and magazines for consumption by the “general public”.

About the Megalithic Portal

The Megalithic Portal is completely independent, with no outside funding save for what we can raise with a bit of advertising on the site, and now through royalties from this book, all of which are being ploughed back into the dayto-day running and further development of the website and our other projects. For the last 10 years we have run as a membership society, similar to any other archaeology society, except with an international reach and outlook. We hold meetings by phone conference and our society members hail from all over Europe, as well as North America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and beyond.

Ardlair recumbent stone circle Cows represent one of the biggest challenges faced by the megalith enthusiast!

One of the inspirations for the Megalithic Portal was my own experience, in the 1980s and early 1990s, of reading about sites in books or magazine articles with no accurate location details. Even now, articles and papers often don't give proper location information. I started compiling links to sites on the early web in

1996. People began to offer their own information and photos, and a collaborative project was born. The Megalithic Portal was formed in 2001 to continue this process. Much of the site’s content has been created by a group of several hundred dedicated volunteers, but there is a huge range in involvement, from those sending in a couple of photos or sites, to people who have contributed more than 10,000 of these.

About this Book

This book is not just made up of my own favourite sites but has been compiled in a collaborative way, just like the Megalithic Portal itself. Contributions in the form of articles, which appear throughout the book, have come in from scores of writers, from archaeologists to alternative theorists to keen site visitors. Many of Britain and Ireland's top prehistorians have kindly contributed pieces about their research.

I have included opinions from a wide range of people who have original ways to approach ancient sites. While I don't personally go along with all of the ideas proposed, I feel it's important to at least give them an airing and let you, the reader, make up your own mind. Sometimes thinking about a problem in a new and creative way can lead to unexpected breakthroughs and we should not be closed minded to different ways of experiencing ancient sites.

The Megalithic Portal photo gallery contains images from several thousand different contributors. Each photo has a voting button allowing visitors to "like" a specific site. This anonymous voting data provided the basis of a longlist for sites to include in the book, from which a team of Megalithic Portal members selected the final list of sites to include for each region. With the voting data in mind, as well as their local knowledge, the team identified the very "best" sites and gave these a star rating. The voting data also provided the basis for most of the Top 10 and 15 lists you will see throughout the book. After all this, we are confident this is the most comprehensive and democratically selected list of prehistoric sites that has ever been put in a book like this, grouped into regions for convenient visiting and browsing.

Site descriptions have been compiled from the available sources, including excavation reports and blogs from all over the various countries and regions. I must here send thanks to the various online national site databases: Canmore (Historic Environment Scotland), PastScape (Historic England), Coflein (Wales), the National Monuments Service Historic Environment Viewer (Republic of Ireland), the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record, and the Manx Museum for their information and help, which has been invaluable. Some of the online entries are quite complex and hard to interpret so I hope our pithy summaries are helpful. Again, these entries have been checked and amended by Megalithic Portal members from all over the UK and Ireland. The vast majority of pictures in the book have been sent in by Megalithic Portal contributors. People have been so generous with their photos, taking time to look through their personal archives. Images have come from members as far afield

as New Zealand and Japan. It has been tricky to keep track of exactly how many sites we've included – in the spirit of the "countless stones" of folklore, we kept getting different totals. However, I can confidently say we feature over 1,000 sites, with more than 600 with a full profile, plus some 400 "Nearby" listings, covering five countries and not forgetting the Isle of Man!

Each site listing includes an eight-figure Ordnance Survey map reference, and gives the OS paper map sheet the site is found on. For the UK the map sheets are: E – Explorer (orange); OL – Outdoor Leisure (yellow); L – Landranger (pink); and D for the Discoverer maps of Northern Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland, the D is for Discovery Map, whose numbering is shared with the North. For Sat Nav and GPS users we also give latitude and longitude locations for sites.

We have not given full directions to each site as we could fill up a book just with these! The Megalithic Portal (**www.megalithic.co.uk**) has a page for each of the entries in this book (directly linked from the ebooks), where you will find more information. You can search by site name or by map reference using the box at top left of any Megalithic Portal page. We also have a great app that allows you to search for sites by name or on a map. Each page links to various online map services and satellite images. Look on the web pages for the Nearby Sites list to find the more obscure sites that we couldn't fit in. You will also find visitor comments and source references at the bottom of each site page. If you know any sources of information we don't currently list or have any comments about sites featured in this book or on the website, please do submit them.

The Megalithic Portal includes a wide range of ancient sites, so I should mention some that we haven't had space to cover in this book: Iron Age features, such as hill forts, brochs and souterrains; Palaeolithic and Mesolithic find spots and camps; early Christian crosses and other early medieval sites; holy wells and sacred springs; modern stone circles; natural features that may have been revered by or inspired prehistoric people.

As this is a "field guide" we have only included a very few (particularly interesting) sites where there is little or nothing to see on the ground. In fact there are many more lost sites that have been destroyed. The Raunds Area Project in Northamptonshire, for example, found more than 20 vanished mounds, barrows, avenues and causewayed enclosures in the Nene valley, near Wellingborough. We list the ones we know about on the website and welcome photos of the surrounding landscape – even if there are no prehistoric remains still to be seen. Visiting sites that are no longer there, imagining what they were like or how they were used, is true "hardcore" site visiting and for this we salute you!

For reasons of space we have had to limit ourselves to the UK, Isle of Man and Ireland. We haven't included sites on the Channel Islands, as these have more in common with the sites of France, and that's something for another day. We did originally look at including parts of continental Europe but felt it would be impossible to do justice to the many thousands of megalithic sites in countries such as Germany, Denmark, France, Spain and Portugal, and in eastern Europe. There are also many ancient sites in the USA and the rest of the Americas. Not forgetting India, China and … why am I trying to list them all? The Portal features sites from 136 countries – including Liechtenstein, which I recently had to add so one of our contributors could post an entry.

SAFETY

Do not rely purely on modern technology for navigation; always carry a backup map and compass. Know your limits and take care around ancient monuments, which can be dangerous places with unseen holes, cliffs and other pitfalls. Take a torch with you and suitable rations if trekking long distances. Wear appropriate footwear and clothing.

In this ebook we have embedded a link in the title of each megalithic site. These lead directly to the relevant pages on the Megalithic Portal web resource, so if you have an Internet connection you can click on these for more information and photos of each site.

How to Get Involved

We have tried to ensure the information in this book is as accurate as possible, but if you find any errors please do let us know so that we can update future editions. We would also love to hear from you on the website. At the Megalithic Portal we aim to be a sounding board for discussion, as well as a repository for accurate and up-to-date information on specific sites and monuments – and all of this requires constant input from our contributors. We strive to be fair to everyone and create an atmosphere where views can be challenged and disagreed with constructively and respectfully. We have, for example, a Sacred Sites and Megalithic Mysteries forum where we encourage discussion of all manner of experiences and theories relating to ancient sites. Just be respectful to others, even if you disagree with their ideas, and you'll be welcome.

Also on the site is a visit log feature, where you can keep a record of all the ancient sites you have visited, along with your comments and personal ratings as you go. This can be found on the right-hand side of each site entry, along with the link to submit photos of your own.

These days, electronic devices such as smartphones are available to all, and these have changed the way we interact with the outdoors, whether with augmented reality, audio guides, geocaching, Pokémon Go or simply being able to access information while on the move. Academic papers are increasingly put online and even traditional closed journals are getting in on the the act, offering free trial periods or codes to get through their paywalls. Many archaeology site databases are now available online. But better linking of information sources is still badly needed and that's something that we try to do at the Megalithic Portal. Official site databases could be better at curating links, and projects should plan for the long-term availability of their data. I have lost count of the number of projects that forget to renew their web addresses, while entire online archives disappear as researchers lose funding, move on or just go for a redesign. Keeping knowledge free and available amounts to the "archaeology of the internet". But to get off my soapbox, it's amazing that this unprecedented amount of information is available to everyone – it's there to be made use of. And don't forget traditional libraries, archives and just getting out there to do your own research.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Much damage is done accidentally by people who mean no harm. Think twice, and don't do anything which would cause degradation to the monument. For

more details on visiting sites, see the Megalithic Portal Charter, linked at the bottom of any page on the website.

- Check access. Exclusions to the “right to roam” include private gardens and cultivated farmland (unless on footpaths or field margins).
- Get permission to visit sites on private land. This is usually granted if asked for politely – many landowners appreciate their sites as much as we do, but repeated unauthorized visits could lead to access being denied to all.
- Don’t climb on the stones or on rock art. o Don’t try to remove lichen or dig near an ancient site.
- Don’t use wax candles or nightlights inside tombs. You can get very effective LED candles that are much cleaner and safer.
- Don’t light fires close to sites. o Do not move, mark or alter the site in any way, even temporarily.
- Don’t hide caches immediately in or around sites or use metal detectors.
- Any artefacts found should be reported to the local museum or via the Portable Antiquities Scheme (finds.org.uk).
- Do not fly drones around ancient sites without permission – for aerial photography try a kite or long pole instead.
- All in all, please be respectful, keep dogs under control and don’t “hog” the monument for your own rituals/purposes if there are others around.

This book is testament to the passion for prehistoric sites held by so many. Everyone can play a part in adding to our knowledge of ancient sites, and anyone can put time into researching, finding, photographing, monitoring and tidying them. I can only imagine what our stone-raising ancestors would have made of people all over the world communicating and rather obsessing over their efforts with seemingly magical writing devices, 5,000 years into the future! It’s a strange but humbling thought.

For a free extra year’s membership of the Megalithic Portal Society (two years for the price of one), go to: **www.megalithic.co.uk/double**

ISLE OF MAN

BALLAKELLY

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Santon**
Map: **SC 3214 7199** | Sheet: **L95** | Lat: **54.11630N** | Long: **4.56966W**

Set in what is known as the Giant's Field, this site is confused by a jumble of granite boulders, some of which resulted from field clearance in the 19th century. The tomb itself has a rectangular chamber or cist, aligned WNW–ESE and surrounded by a kerb. The stones to the southwest are presumed to be capstones. One of the kerb stones, to the west, has a number of cup-marks.

CLOVEN STONES

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Baldrine**
Map: **SC 4292 8141** | Sheet: **L95** | Lat: **54.20430N** | Long: **4.40981W**

Clearly visible from the road, this is a remarkable survival in the front garden of a bungalow. The barrow has a chamber with one or two compartments, with two tall 1.8m and 2.1m (6ft and 7ft) portal stones to the NNE. The name “Cloven” refers particularly to the eastern stone, which is split down the middle – probably due to frost action. On the southeast the revetting or kerb can be seen. It’s considered to be quite a late example of this type of passage grave.

MEAYLL HILL

Chambered Cairn | Nearest Village: **Cregneash**
Map: **SC 1895 6778** | Sheet: **L95** | Lat: **54.074035N** | Long: **4.76869W**

Just below the brow of the hill and with stunning views over the south of the island and out to sea, this unique monument has six pairs of roofless, T-shaped burial chambers arranged in a circle enclosing a space about 13m (44ft) across. Each pair was originally accessed by a passage from the circle’s exterior. The

interior contained a central cist or chamber, found under rubble. The stones are not large (the biggest is 1m/3ft 3in tall), but this is a well-preserved, fascinating site. Pottery, white quartz pebbles and cremations were found during excavations in 1893 and 1911. It's suggested it began life as a central round cairn or embanked circle, with the chambers added later, the whole finally being covered by a kerbed cairn. Legend relates that the place is haunted by a troop of ghost riders.

Nearby | At SC 2088 6833, 2km (1¼ miles) ENE of Meayll Hill, is the **Giant's Quoiting Stone**.

GIANT'S GRAVE (KEW) Alt Name: **The Kew**

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Poortown**
Map: **SC 2743 8340** | Sheet: **L95** | Lat: **54.21720N** | Long: **4.64827W**

The remains of a passage tomb, on private land but visible (indistinctly) from the track. There is some evidence of a mound, and the two rows of stones that form the long rectangular chamber stretch east–west for about 8m (26ft).

Nearby | At SC 2775 8193, 1.6km (1 mile) SSE of this Giant's Grave is another one, in **St John's**. A chamber or cist is built into the wall, right by the road, just along from Tynwald Hill.

CRONK GUCKLEY MOUNDS

Round Mounds | Nearest Village: **Kirk Michael**
Map: **SC 3123 8945** | Sheet: **L95** | Lat: **54.27276N** | Long: **4.59337W**

The Round Mounds project has been investigating some of the 160 round mounds on the island, including the three at Cronk Guckley, where a cist burial, complete with collared urn (indicating an early Bronze Age origin for the site), was discovered during excavations in summer 2017. The excavation also confirmed that the mound is human-made, with layers of earth and turf. Rubbly material found around the mound looks to be evidence of a ring cairn, with the larger blocks of bedrock quarried elsewhere and deliberately placed around the edge of the mound as kerbing. The three mounds have been damaged by ploughing but are visible on a ridge with great views of the sea. They're all around 15m (49ft) in diameter and between 0.5m (1½ft) and 1m (3ft 3in) in

height. On private land, so seek permission.

Nearby | At SC 2893 8747, 3.2km (2 miles) WSW of Cronk Guckley, is **Corvalley** cairn (also known as the Devil's Elbow), a badly damaged, large cairn or round barrow, measuring about 29 × 23m (95 × 75ft) and reaching about 1.9m (6ft 2in) in height. There is at least one enclosed chamber or cist, which is roofed and partially walled with slabs of quartz. On private land, so seek permission.

KING ORRY'S GRAVE

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Minorca**
Map: **SC 4389 8439** | Sheet: **L95** | Lat: **54.231352N** | Long: **4.396505W**

Photo © Jos Sanders

The King Orry with whom this site is linked in legend was Godred, the 11th-century Norse-Gaelic ruler of Dublin and the Isles, who took control of the Isle of Man in 1079. Lots of sites on the island are traditionally associated with him. Here, there are two chambered tombs of the horned or Clyde cairn type,

separated by houses and a road – or possibly one very long tomb. Both tombs are aligned northwest–southeast.
The eastern tomb, which stands beside the road, is similar in structure and layout to Cashtal-yn-ard (see opposite). Two chambers, linked by low septal stones, and part of a third chamber, remain, and there is also a horned forecourt, surrounded by a revetted kerb that once held back the cairn. Six upright stones remain in the forecourt and the tomb. Sherds of a plain bowl were found in the first chamber, along with traces of a burial. In the garden across the road (follow the signs) are two further chambers, and a 2.7m (8ft 10in) portal stone. Stumps of other stones suggest a shallow forecourt.

Nearby | At SC 4520 8567, 1.9km (just over 1 mile) ENE of King Orry's Grave, is the **Spiral Stone** at Ballaragh, an earthfast boulder set in the bank of the lane leading to the village. It has three or four spirals and some possible cup-marks toward the lower left of the stone, which can be hard to see. It is the only known example of rock art on the island.

CASHTAL-YN-ARD

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Glen Mona**

Map: **SC 4622 8923** | Sheets: **L95** | Lat: **54.27552N** | Long: **4.36327W**

"Evening sunlight conditions are required to see traces of five cup-marks. They can be found on the inside of the smaller, left-hand stone that forms part of the entrance to the chambers from the forecourt." Adam Stanford

"The castle of the heights", Cashtal-yn-ard is set on high ground with fine views overlooking Maughold and the sea across to Cumbria. This large tomb extends for around 40m (131ft) and has a west-facing square or U-shaped forecourt. A number of stones remain in the façade, the largest of which is 2.3m (7½ft) high. There are five chambers, originally covered by a cairn of loose rock (about 1.2m/4ft high when first recorded) held in place by a kerb, with dry-stone walling in some places. An area of burnt shale and charcoal fragments was found about 3.3m (11ft) behind the final chamber, overlaid with cairn material. The walling, most of the cairn and some of the uprights were removed in the mid-19th century for housebuilding.

WALES

South Wales

Top 15 Burial Chambers in England & Wales

1. **Pentre Ifan (Pembrokeshire)** p.220

2. **Lanyon Quoit (Cornwall)** p.42

3. **Bryn Celli Ddu (Anglesey)** p.244

4. **Trethevy Quoit (Cornwall)** p.53

5. **West Kennet (Wiltshire)** p.109

6. **Chûn Quoit (Cornwall)** p.39

7. **Carreg Samson (Pembrokeshire)** p.217

8. **Devil's Den (Wiltshire)** p.113

9. **Trefignath (Anglesey)** p.248

10. **Wayland's Smithy (Oxfordshire)** p.113

11. **Carwynnen Quoit (Cornwall)** p.42

12. **Spinsters' Rock (Devon)** p.72

13. **St Lythan's (Glamorgan)** p.207

14. **Lligwy (Anglesey)** p.249

15. **Mulfra Quoit (Cornwall)** p.41

Monmouthshire

HAROLD'S STONES

Stone Row | Nearest Village: **Trellech**
Map: **SO 4993 0514** | Sheets: **OL14 L162** | Lat: **51.74271N** | Long: **2.72658W**

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

The village (its name meaning “three stones”) is named after this trio of tall stones (all of the local brown “puddingstone”), which lean at a variety of dramatic angles and may once have formed part of a larger monument. The central stone has smoothed surfaces and two large cup-marks. Legends abound here. The stones are said to commemorate a battle won by King Harold – and it is noteworthy that the 1689 sundial in the local church is inscribed with an image of the stones and the words “HIC FUIT VICTOR HARALDAS”. Different tales also relate how the giant Jack O’ Kent played quoits with the Devil here. In one, Jack, having tossed the three stones to Trellech, then threw a fourth stone that fell short and had to be moved to allow for ploughing. It’s been suggested this represents a folk memory of a fourth standing stone.

CARREG MAEN-TARO

Standing Stone | Nearest Town: **Brynmawr**
Map: **SO 2383 1134** | Sheets: **OL13 L161** | Lat: **51.7955N** | Long: **3.10589W**

A fine standing stone, 1.7m (5½ft) tall, which is traditionally believed to commemorate the site of a battle fought between two kings. Historically, it has been used as a boundary stone, which is why it's inscribed "M" on the side that faces Monmouthshire, and "B" on the side that faces Brecknockshire, the old county name (now Powys).

Photo © Cerrig

TRANSLATING WELSH PLACE NAMES

Simon Charlesworth and Stephen Rule

This glossary is to help decipher the meaning of Welsh site names. Note that some letters have mutated over time or for grammatical reasons ("c" to "g" is particularly common). The word menhir, denoting a standing stone, comes from *maen* ("stone") and *hir* ("long").

Welsh	Variants, eg mutations (m) plurals (pl) Anglicizations (Eng)	English	Other uses and notes
bach	fach (m)	small, little	dear (loved)
ban	fan (m), bannau (pl)	peak	
banc	fanc (m)	bank	
bardd	fardd (m), beirdd (pl)	poet, bard	
bedd	fedd (m), beddau (pl)	grave	normally followed by a name
bryn	fryn/mryn (m), bryniau (pl)	hill	
buwch		cow	
bwlch		gap	
bychan	fychan	little, small	
capel	gapel (m), chapel (m), capeli (pl)	chapel	
carn(edd)	garn (m), carneddau (pl)	tumulus	especially cairns
carreg/ cerrig	garreg (m)	stone	
castell		castle	
cawr/ cawres	gawr/gawres (m)	giant/ giantess	
cefn		back	ridge
cegid	cegiden	hemlock	
celli	gelli (m)	grove(s)	
clawdd	cloddiau	hedge	
coch	goch (m)	red	
coed	goed (m)	tree	woodland
coitan	goitan (m), coiten (alt)	quoit	

cors	gors (m)	bog	
craig	graig (m), creigiau (pl)	rock	outcrop
crib	grib (m)	comb	crest
crug	grug (m), chrug (m)	cairn	
cwm	gwm (m), cymau (pl)	valley, glen	
cwrt		court	
du	ddu (m), duon (pl)	black, blackened	
eglwys		church	
filiast	viliast (Eng), miliast (alt)	greyhound (bitch)	
garw	arw (m)	rough	
gollen		hazel	
gorsedd	orsedd (m), (r) ossett (Eng)	throne	bardic meeting point
gwal		lair	
gwaun	waun (m)	moorland	
gwen	wen (m), gwyn	white	also: pure, bare, fresh, new, clean
gwern	wern (m)	alder	
gwrach	wrach (m)	witch	often seen in the mist
gwr	gwyr (m)	husband	
hen		old	
isaf		lower	
llan	lan (m)	church, clearing (of land)	normally followed by a personal name
lle		place	
llech	lech (m), llechi (pl)	slate	can simply be "stone" – as in cromlech (= crooked stone)
llety		lodging house	
llwyd	lwyd (m)	grey	
llyn	lyn (m)	lake	
llys	lys (m)	court	
maen	meini (pl)	stone	
mawr	fawr (m), mawrion (pl)	big	
meirw		(the) dead	
moel	foel (m)	bald	rounded hilltop

morfa		fen	
mynydd	fynydd (m), mynyddoedd (pl)	mountain	
nant	nentydd (pl)	stream	
neuadd		hall	
newydd		new	
pen	ben (m), pennau (pl)	head	also: top (of), peak, end
plas	blas (m)	mansion, palace	
pont	bont (m)	bridge	
pump		five	
pwll	bwll (m)	pool	
rhiw		hill	
rhos		moor	
saeson/ sais		English (man)	from "Saxon"
saith		seven	
tafarn		tavern	

taro		to hit	
tarw	darw (m), teirw (pl)	bull	
tre(f)	dre(f) (m), trefi (pl)	town	
tri/tair		three	
troed	droed (m), traed (pl)	foot	used for foot of hill
twlc		pigsty	
twr		heap, tower	
tŷ	dŷ (m), tai (pl)	house	sometimes seen without circumflex
uchaf		upper	also: highest, super
wyth		eight	
y/yr		the	
ystum		curve	

Y GARN LLWYD

Chambered Tmb | Nearest Village: **Gaerllwyd**
Map: **ST 4476 9674** | Sheets: **OL14 L171** | Lat: **51.6667N** | Long: **2.80011W**

A tomb with a dramatically collapsed capstone, partially supported by five upright stones, and with other recumbent stones giving the site a charming higgledy-piggledy appearance. The cairn is mostly missing. The tomb is behind the hedge, near a crossroads on the Chepstow–Usk road.

GRAY HILL

Stone Circle and Row | Nearest Village: **Parc Seymour**
Map: **ST 4380 9353** | Sheets: **OL14 L171** | Lat: **51.63775N** | Long: **2.81347W**

On Gray Hill, with fine views over the Severn estuary, are multiple prehistoric remains, including a small stone circle or possible kerb cairn. It's about 10m (33ft) across, with 13 low stones remaining. Stones inside the circle may be the remains of a setting or chamber. There are a couple of outliers; the one to the northwest, some 55m (180ft) WNW from the circle, is 2.3m (7½ft) tall. It may be part of a stone row, as several other large stones climb from the circle to the hilltop cairn.

Nearby | At ST 4339 9355, 409m (1,342ft) west of the circle, are the remains of a summit cairn. A cairn cemetery is centred around ST 4409 9327, 384m (1,260ft) ESE of the circle. There are apparently nine barrows here, but the vegetation is dense. Good luck!

GOLDCLIFF EAST

Prehistoric Footprints | Nearest Village: **Goldcliff**
Map: **ST 3771 8206 (approx)** | Sheets: **E152 L171** | Lat: **51.53402N** | Long: **2.89935W**

The promontory at Goldcliff is well known for the Mesolithic sites found in the intertidal zone. The remains of an oak forest, as well as flint scatters, wood and bone tools, and animal bones have all been found here, indicating seasonal hunter-gatherer activity. Also, and most famously, there are footprints. As the esturine silts erode, the prints of humans, including small children, are periodically exposed, as well as the prints of birds and animals. Most of the site is accessible only during low tide, and the footprints, by their very nature, are ephemeral – exposed, then eroded and lost for ever

Nearby | At **Uskmouth** at approx ST 328 826, *c.* 5km (3 miles) west of Goldcliff East, the footprints of Mesolithic people have been found, as well as evidence of aurochs, wolves, deer and birds. As at Goldcliff East, the prints' whereabouts are impossible to predict, as they come and go with the tides.

GWERN-Y-CLEPPA **Chambered Tomb** | Nearest Town: **Newport**

Map: **ST 2764 8505** | Sheets: **E152 L171** | Lat: **51.55966N** | Long: **3.0452W**

A surprising survival just north of the M4 and close to an industrial estate. Once you know where it is you can see it from the motorway. Seven stones remain, including a probable capstone.

Nearby | At ST 2411 8342, 4km (2½ miles) WSW of Gwern-y-cleppa, is the **Druidstone**, also known as Gwal-y-viliast, on private land in the grounds of Druidstone House. This broad, shield-shaped stone is 2.8m (9ft) tall by 2.4m (7ft 10in) wide and 1m (3ft 3in) thick. The owners request visitors phone ahead to arrange access (contact details are supplied on the Megalithic Portal page for this site).

MAP

South Glamorgan

TINKINSWOOD

Chambered Long Cairn | Nearest Village: **St Nicholas**
Map: **ST 0922 7331** | Sheets: **E151 L171** | Lat: **51.45146N** | Long: **3.30781W**

Tinkinswood is the proud possessor of the largest capstone in mainland Britain, a huge 7.4 × 4.5m (24 × 15ft) slab, weighing 36 tonnes (40 tons). This Cotswold-Severn tomb has an east-facing forecourt leading to the main chamber, and a trapezoidal cairn. There's a cist on the northern side. In 1914, the remains of 50 people were excavated from the main chamber. The area near the tomb known as the Quarry was long thought to be the source of the capstone, but investigation in 2011, which also identified a nearby Bronze Age barrow, found no evidence that this was the case. Local tradition holds that if you spend the night here on May Day Eve, St John's Eve (23 June) or the night before the winter solstice, you will die, go mad or become a poet. A group of boulders to the south is said to be women punished for dancing on the Sabbath.

Photo © Stephen Rule

ST LYTHAN'S Alt Names: Gwal-y-filiast, Maes-y-felin

Former Chambered Long Cairn | Nearest Village: **St Nicholas**

Map: **ST 1009 7230** | Sheets: **E151 L171** | Lat: **51.44252N** | Long: **3.29504W**

Gwal-y-filiast means "kennel of the greyhound bitch" and a number of Welsh chambered tombs have similar names – this one seemingly was used as an animal shelter in the early 19th century. The 0.8m (2ft 7in) thick capstone, 4.2 × 3m (13ft 9in × 10ft), is dramatically balanced on three uprights, but few traces of the cairn or mound of this Cotswold-Severn tomb remain. Excavations in 2011 revealed the collapsed façade at the front, along with the rubble that had been used to seal the chamber. The field in which the monument stands is said to be cursed, and it's also said that on Midsummer Eve the capstone spins round three times, and after that (or before, who knows?) all the stones go down to the river to bathe.

Photo © Paul Blades

West Glamorgan

TYTHEGSTON

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Laleston**
Map: **SS 8646 7925** | Sheets: **E151 L170** | Lat: **51.50074N** | Long: **3.63714W**

The capstone, although partially buried in the remains of the cairn, is very impressive, at around 4 × 1.8m (13 × 6ft). There's not a lot else to see, though.

Nearby | At SS 9269 8193, 6.8km (4¼ miles) east of Tythegston chambered tomb, is **Coity** chambered cairn. It's badly damaged, the large, pitted capstone now partially supported by collapsed uprights.

CARREG BICA Alt Names: Maen Bradwen, Hoat Stone

Standing Stone | Nearest Village: **Birchgrove (nr Neath)**
Map: **SS 7248 9946** | Sheets: **E165 L170** | Lat: **51.67939N** | Long: **3.84567W**

"A cup-marked stone is a few hundred yards to the north. I can find no mention of it on Coflein or the other monument databases, so it may even be a new discovery!" Paul Blades

A fantastic slab of local sandstone and one of the tallest standing stones in Wales at 4.3m (14ft) high. It is mentioned as a Gower boundary marker in a 13th-century charter of King John. It is said to bathe in the River Neath on Easter Morning.

PARC-LE-BREOS Alt Name: Parc Cwm

Chambered Long Cairn | Nearest Village: **Parkmill** | Map: **SS 5373 8984**
Sheets: **E164 L159** | Lat: **51.58837N** | Long: **4.11277W**

A fine example of a Cotswold-Severn transepted chambered tomb, excavated in 1869 and 1960–61, after which it was restored. The name comes from the medieval deer park in which it is situated. The 22m (72ft) cairn is aligned north–south, and the forecourt, with its neat dry-stone walling, leads to a passage built of limestone slabs interspersed with more dry-stone walling. The passage has two pairs of chambers. It's estimated the remains of around 40 people were interred here, and it seems likely that the bodies, or some of them, may have lain elsewhere before being placed in the tomb. Animal bones were also found, including some more recent ones but also others dating to the Ice Age, which were perhaps collected accidentally or deliberately from Cat Hole Cave (see below).

Nearby | Caves near Parc-le-breos include **Cat Hole Cave**, 184m (604ft) NNE at SS 5377 9002, where evidence of human occupation spanning at least 30,000 years has been found. It's best known for its Palaeolithic finds, including the discovery in 2010 of an engraving, possibly of a reindeer, from 12,500–14,500 years ago. Creswell Crags (see page 145) is the only other British site where art from this period has been found. Recent vandalism means the cave is no longer accessible to the public. It is thought the cave may have been used to expose bodies before they were interred at Parc-le-breos. At SS 5316 8812, 1.8km (just over 1 mile) SSW of Park-le-breos chambered tomb, is **Penmaen Burrows**, also known as Pen-y-crug. This badly damaged chambered tomb, with a displaced capstone, two chambers and a passage, is not easy to find, especially in summer when it's very overgrown.

MAEN CETI Alt Name: **Arthur's Stone**

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Reynoldston**

Map: **SS 4914 9055** | Sheets: **E164 L159** | Lat: **51.59354N** | Long: **4.17928W**

Located at one of the few locations on the Gower where the sea is visible to both the north and the south, Maen Ceti is famous for its enormous capstone, 2.2m (7ft 3in) thick and originally measuring about 4m (13ft) across. Part of it has broken off but it's still very impressive, weighing in at about 23 tonnes (25 tons). The burial chamber is set in the remains of a ring cairn, about 23m (75ft) in diameter. Nine uprights remain in the tomb, dividing it into two chambers. The capstone is a natural boulder that was underpinned so a chamber could be hollowed out below (it is considered unlikely that it was ever covered by the

cairn). Legends abound here. The name Arthur's Stone comes from the legend that the king, standing on the opposite shore, found a pebble in his shoe and irritably flung it up on to Cefn Bryn. It's also said that after Henry Tudor's troops landed at Milford Haven, they made a detour to visit the site (presumably to support Henry's claim to be rightful king of England), before going on to defeat Richard III at Bosworth Field. Another story says St David split the capstone with a blow of his sword, "In proof that it was not sacred; and he commanded a well to spring from under it."

Nearby | At SS 4902 9056, 120m (394ft) west of Maen Ceti, **Cefyn Bryn Great Barrow** is the largest of the many round cairns in the area. Close to Maen Ceti, it's easier to find than many of the others and has wonderful views out to sea. At SS 4926 9021, about 360m (1,180ft) SSE, is another cairn, **Cefyn Bryn Cairn 2**. It has variously been interpreted as a settlement or a ring cairn with cists. There are other cairns within 1km (0.6 miles).

MAP

SWEYNE'S HOWE NORTH

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Llangennith**
Map: **SS 4211 8992** | Sheets: **E164 L159** | Lat: **51.58595N** | Long: **4.28027W**

A chambered tomb, part of an oval cairn 18.3 × 13.1m (60 × 43ft) and 0.6m (2ft) high. More clearly visible is the inner cairn of much larger stones, with the badly damaged but still quite imposing chamber at its western end. The capstone leans against two uprights.

Photo © Martyn Copcutt

Nearby | At SS 4210 8981, 169m (554ft) WSW of Sweyne's Howe North (and visible from there), is the badly damaged cairn of **Sweyne's Howe South**. It measures 20.7 × 14.9m (68 × 48ft) across and 0.7m (2ft 3in) high. The large slabs visible to the north might have been part of the forecourt or chamber.

CARN LLECHART

Ring Cairn | Nearest Town: **Pontardawe**
Map: **SN 6973 0627** | Sheets: **E165 L160** | Lat: **51.73994N** | Long: **3.88809W**

First noted in William Camden's *Britannia* (1695 edition), this may be a stone circle around a cist burial or the remains of a large ring cairn. Approached from the north, the monument can be seen clearly against the skyline. Around 13.5m (44ft) across, it has 25 slab-like kerb stones, none more than 0.9m (3ft). In the middle there's a cist, 2.1 × 1.2m (6ft 10in × 4ft). The capstone is missing, as is the eastern side slab.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

Nearby | At SN 6967 0627, 60m (197ft) west of the ring cairn, is a chambered tomb. It's ruinous and rather contentious (suggestions having been made that it's the result of quarrying or natural outcropping). The possible capstone is massive: 5.3 × 2.4m (17ft 4in × 7ft 10in).

Carmarthenshire

BANCBRYN Alt Name: **Mynydd-y-betws**

Stone Row | Nearest Village: **Cwymgors**
Map: **SN 6886 1036** | Sheets: **OL12 L159** | Lat: **51.77649N** | Long: **3.90223W**

Wind farm development up on the moorland led to the discovery of what appears to be an important prehistoric ceremonial landscape, with a stone row as well as more than 50 cairns, some kerbed (see below). The row is aligned southwest–northeast and runs for at least 700m (2,296ft). Although the stones are small, they're close together and the row is easy to follow. Sadly, the new roads for the wind farm cut the site into three, it having been mysteriously missed by the pre-development survey.

Nearby | At SN 6863 1021, 274m (899ft) WSW of the stone row, is a cairn cemetery that includes at least 30 cairns of various sizes, scattered along the summit and southern slope of Bancbryn.

At SN 68951 9839, 390m (1,279ft) SSE of the stone row, there is a ruined platform cairn that measures 11m (36ft) diameter and up to 0.5m (1½ft) in height. The remains of a kerb are visible.

Bancbryn Stone Row

Sandy Gerrard, archaeologist and author of the *English Heritage Book of Dartmoor*

The Bancbryn stone row includes a single 717m (2,352ft) line of at least 173 stones, leading downslope from a small cairn. Remarkably, along its upper length, Hartland Point in Devon and Exmoor can be seen at the limit of visibility.

The row was identified after planning permission had been completed for a wind farm. Following the discovery, two areas were excavated prior to construction. Cadw (the historical environment service of the Welsh government) decided there was not enough evidence to support a prehistoric interpretation, although they were unable to offer any alternative.

The archaeological contractors concluded that the alignment was unlikely to be prehistoric because it is not straight, consists of stones of different sizes, the spacing is irregular and most significantly that long rows consisting of small stones are not found in Wales. All these objections illustrate a total lack of appreciation of the varied form and character of rows. Despite the inaccuracy of the conclusions, they have been widely accepted.

Further excavations in 2017 also failed to provide definitive dating evidence. The stones' stratigraphic position was consistent with a prehistoric date and the lack of any historical evidence, combined with the form and context, provide powerful support for a prehistoric date. One of the interesting things discovered during the excavation is that the area in which the row stands had never been cultivated. We looked for evidence of cultivation and found none, whereas ard marks were found on the other side of the hill.

The precise visual relationships at Bancbryn have formed the catalyst for an examination of other rows. The results thus far firmly support the idea that rows were positioned in the landscape to provide precise and particular views to significant places.

TAIR CARN ISAF

Cairn | Nearest Village: **Brynamman**
Map: **SN 6833 1674** | Sheets: **OL12 L159** | Lat: **51.8337N** | Long: **3.91233W**

A cairn cemetery with four cairns named A–D. All four are badly damaged, with C the best preserved, and B the largest, 20m (66ft) in diameter and 2.2m (7ft 2in) high. The cairn at SN 6806 1683 has clearly been sited to provide a restricted and perhaps special view of one its larger neighbours (a link rediscovered by Simon Charlesworth).

Photo © Simon Charlesworth

Nearby | At SN 6921 1737, just over 1km (0.6 miles) ENE is **Tair Carn Uchaf**, where three cairns (A, B and C) run east–west on the ridge (*uchaf* means "upper"; *isaf*, "lower"). The first two are prominent viewed from Carn Pen-y-

clogau. Cairn B is the most impressive, 22m (72ft) across and 3.2m (10ft 5in) high.

PICWS DU

Cairn | Nearest Village: **Llanddeusant**
Map: **SN 8117 2185** | Sheets: **OL12 L160** | Lat: **51.8825N** | Long: **3.72784W**

On the ridge of Mynydd Du (Black Mountain), this turf-covered mound, topped by a modern walkers' cairn, is 19.5m (64ft) across and 1m (3ft 3in) high. In the centre, an upright slab is the remains of a possible cist.

Photo © Simon Charlesworth

Nearby | At SN 8215 2234, higher up the ridge and just over 1km (0.6 miles) ENE of Picws Du, is **Fan Foel** cairn. During excavations, cremated bone, flint tools and an urn were found in the cist, and pollen analysis suggests flowering

plants were also placed there. There's no longer a great deal to see, although the cist is visible. The cairn has been damaged by walkers taking stones from it. At SN 8243 2206, a further 398m (1,306ft) ESE along the ridge, is **Twr-y-fan Foel**, a turf-covered cairn about 11m (36ft) across, topped by a walkers' cairn. It's in a wonderful setting on the highest peak of Mynnyd Du, with incredible views.

Top 10 Prehistoric Sites in Wales with Breathtaking Views

1. **Pen-y-fan (Powys)** p.228
2. **Maen Ceti (Glamorgan)** p.208
3. **Pen-y-beacon (Powys)** p.234
4. **Twr-y-fan Foel (Carmarthenshire)** p.211
5. **Carreg Samson (Pembrokeshire)** p.217
6. **Bedd-yr-afanc (Pembrokeshire)** p.222
7. **Moel Goedog (Gwynedd)** p.238
8. **Gop-y-goleuni (Flintshire)** p.255
9. **Barclodiad-y-gawres (Anglesey)** p.247
10. **Gray Hill (Monmouthshire)** p.205

West Wales

Carmarthan

BANNAU SIR GAER Alt Name: **Sychnant**

Stone Circle | Nearest Town: **Llangadog**
Map: **SN 8086 2440** | Sheets: **OL12 L160** | Lat: **51.90535N** | Long: **3.73322W**

Up on the open moor in a really beautiful, though isolated, location, this circle can be hard to find. Look for the largest stone, which reaches 0.85m (2ft 9in). There are at least 18 stones here, with a couple completely buried. All the stones are sandstone except one of quartz conglomerate. There are two possible outliers standing to the northwest.

Photo © Simon Charlesworth

TRICHRUG Alt Name: **Pen-y-biccws**

Cairn | Nearest Village: **Capel Gwynfe**
Map: **SN 6994 2296** | Sheets: **OL12 L160** | Lat: **51.88996N** | Long:

3.89138W

There are four barrows here, numbered I–IV; only I remains intact, at 20m (66ft) across and 3.3m (10ft 9in) high. Barrow II has a trig point on it. Stone from Barrow III was taken to build a nearby wall. Barrow IV may not be prehistoric at all. A local story about the giant of Trichrug, who was known as a champion pebble-tosser – and who beat neighbouring giants by hurling a huge rock across the sea to Ireland – may be taken to explain all the cairns in the area!

Nearby | At SN 7170 1859, 4.7km (almost 3 miles) southeast of Trichrug, is **Carn Pen-y-clogau**, an impressive cairn 18m (59ft) in diameter and 3.4m (11ft) high. A shelter has been built into the centre. It's only 1.6km (1 mile) from the road but the difficult terrain makes a direct route impossible.

At SN 7275 1890, 4.9km (just over 3 miles) southeast from Trichrug, on the edge of a rocky plateau and with fabulous views, **Carn Pen Rhiw-ddu** is well preserved and measures 11m (36ft) in diameter and 2.2m (7ft 2in) high.

MAP

TWLC-Y-FILIAST Alt Names: **Arthur's Table, Bwrdd Arthur, Ebenezer**

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Llangynog**
Map: **SN 3381 1618** | Sheets: **E177 L159** | Lat: **51.81946N** | Long: **4.41262W**

A damp and atmospheric tomb in the woods, mossy and full of character, with three uprights and a fallen capstone surviving. Excavation in 1953 found evidence of an 18 × 9m (59 × 30ft) mound, a series of pits and a possible ante-chamber. A pendant and a flint scraper were found just outside the chamber. Twlc-y-filiast is on private land, but can be viewed from a bridge over the stream, which is on a public footpath.

MAP

MORFA BYCHAN

Chambered Cairns | Nearest Village: **Pendine**
Map: **SN 2213 0749** | Sheets: **E177 L158** | Lat: **51.73781N** | Long: **4.57745W**

Five cairns, four with chambers, among the jumble of rock and bracken on the ridge. They run north– south, and are impressive even in their ruinous state. Getting up to the tombs involves a very steep climb. Great views.

Nearby | At SN 2218 0724, 255m (837ft) south of the above site, is **Forest Chamber**, also known as Morfa Bychan beach chamber, a possible burial chamber at the base of the cliff below the Morfa Bychan group. It's on the beach now, but sea levels were lower in the past. Look for the massive stone that may be a capstone, 3 × 2m (9ft 10in × 6½ft) and 0.5m (1½ft) thick.

GWAL-Y-FILIAST Alt Name: **Bwrdd Arthur**

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Llanboidy**
Map: **SN 1705 2564** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **51.89919N** | Long: **4.66053W**

Photo © Karen Sawyer

A lovely chambered tomb on a ridge in a very atmospheric wooded setting above the River Taf. Gwal-y-filiast means “the kennel of the greyhound bitch”; Bwrdd Arthur is “Arthur’s table”. The chunky capstone is supported by four uprights, and points toward the river. A few kerb stones from the mound survive. The walk from the road can be very muddy.

MEINI GWYR Alt Names: **Buarth Arthur, Glandy Cross**

Henge | Nearest Village: **Eifilwen**
Map: **SN 1417 2658** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **51.90667N** | Long: **4.70285W**

The area around Glandy Cross seems to have been of some significance in prehistoric times. This is an unusual (for Wales) embanked, sub-circular enclosure. There were 19 standing stones here originally, of which two remain upright in the field today, one 1m (3ft 3in) high and the other 1.7m (5½ft). Other stones lying in the circle area and nearby hedges could be associated with the site. The henge, which has an entrance to the northwest, measures 36.6m (120ft) in diameter. Very easily accessible through a gate from the road.

Nearby | At SN 1395 2661, 221m (725ft) west of Meini Gwyr, are the two

remaining stones of **Yr Allor** (“The Altar”), both about 1.3m (4ft 3in) tall. There were once three stones here, and it’s thought they may have formed a cove. Excavation found evidence of associated quartz cobbles, a pit circle and wooden screening. They are on private land, but viewable through the gate from the road. Look out for a row of three round barrows, cut in half by the building of the road.

CARN BESI Alt Name: Dolwilim Dolmen

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Eifilwen**
Map: **SN 1563 2768** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **51.91704N** | Long: **4.68224W**

Only the capstone remains of what is thought to have once been a chambered tomb. The location offers sweeping views of the surrounding mountains, and there’s also a convenient parking spot close by, next to a reservoir on the A478. However, a barbed wire fence prevents access to the stone.

Pembrokeshire

MAP

KING’S QUOIT

Burial Chamber | Nearest Village: **Manorbier**
Map: **SS 0593 9728** | Sheets: **OL36 L158** | Lat: **51.64074N** | Long: **4.8061W**

The views across Manorbier Bay from this Pembrokeshire site are wonderful, and the tomb is just a short walk from the beach, along the coastal path. The 4 × 2.5m (13ft × 8ft 2in) capstone is partially earthfast, and also supported by two uprights.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

HANGING STONE

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Llangwm**
Map: **SM 9721 0823** | Sheets: **OL36 L158** | Lat: **51.73599N** | Long: **4.93831W**

"One of the best little-known sites in Wales." Christopher Bickerton (possibly applies to paper book as well?)

With its chunky capstone and three uprights this is a very cute burial chamber. There are further stones in the hedge – perhaps a second capstone and more uprights. No traces remain of a cairn or barrow, or of the dry-stone walling noted between the uprights in 1864.

COETAN ARTHUR

Chambered Tomb | Nearest City: **St David's**
Map: **SM 7253 2806** | Sheets: **OL35 L157** | Lat: **51.90451N** | Long: **5.30816W**

In a great location near St David's Head, this burial chamber has a huge collapsed capstone, about 4 × 2.6m (13 × 8½ft), supported on one side by a 1.5m (5ft) upright. There are a couple of fallen uprights and signs of a passage, as well as some evidence of a cairn or barrow. Another tomb of the same name (*coetan* means "quoit") was once found nearby, but destroyed in 1844.

Nearby | At SM 7351 2790, 1km (0.6 miles) east of Coetan Arthur, are the two chambered tombs of **Carn Llidi** on an outcrop of the same name, about 2m (6½ft) apart. The chambers are rockcut pits, and the capstones are partly supported by uprights. The western capstone is 2.7 × 2 m (8ft 10in × 6½ft); the fallen eastern capstone (not in its original place) is 1.8 × 1.4m (5ft 10in × 4ft 7in). There are beautiful views across the bay.

“Walk north along the coastal trail from Porth Mawr (Whitesands Bay) car park. Around 100m after the track turns west above the third bay (Porth Lleuog), look for a narrow, steep trail that heads north up the hill – this will lead you directly to Coetan Arthur.” Drew Parsons

CARREG SAMSON Alt Name: **Longhouse Cromlech**

Portal Dolmen | Nearest Village: **Abercastle**

Map: **SM 8484 3351** | Sheets: **OL35 L157** | Lat: **51.95833N** | Long: **5.13291W**

An impressive monument in a spectacular location overlooking Abercastle Bay, Carreg Samson stands at the head of a valley sloping down to the sea and the island of Ynys-y-castell. Seven stones stand, ranging in height from 1.1m (3ft

7in) to 2.2m (7ft 3in), with three supporting the capstone, 4.7 × 2.7m (15ft 5in × 8ft 10in) and 1m (3ft 3in) thick. Excavation in 1968 revealed four more stone-holes, perhaps forming a passage to the northwest. The chamber was found to have been built over a pit (filled in with clay and stones) that could have originally contained the capstone. The name derives from a legend that St Samson of Dol dropped the capstone in place using his little finger.

Photo © Roger K. Read

PARC-Y-CROMLECH

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Town: **Fishguard**
Map: **SM 9422 3907** | Sheets: **OL35 L157** | Lat: **52.01181N** | Long: **4.99994W**

Resembling an Irish wedge tomb, this ruinous burial chamber, 3.9 × 1.8m (12ft 9in × 5ft 11in), is very low to the ground, the capstone resting on three horizontal supporting stones. The tomb is on private land; seek permission at the

farm.

Photo © Roger K. Read

Nearby | Centred at SM 9480 3910, 580m (1,902ft) east of Parc-y-cromlech, the three rockcut Neolithic tombs known as **Garn Wen** are a surprise find behind a terrace of houses in Goodwick. They would have overlooked Fishguard Bay and Dinas Head before the houses were built. Carreg Samson is the largest, with a 4 × 3.2m (13ft × 10ft 5in) capstone. There may be a fourth chamber to the north – nine tombs in total were recorded here in the early 20th century.

GARN TURNE

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **St Dogwells**
Map: **SM 9792 2725** | Sheets: **OL35 L157** | Lat: **51.90703N** | Long: **4.93915W**

A badly damaged but still impressive tomb, with an immense capstone, 5 × 3.5m (16 × 11½ft) and 1m (3ft 3in) thick, weighing around 80 tonnes (88 tons). When the capstone collapsed, it knocked over three of its supporting uprights, but several of the chamber's other stones, including one of 2.5m (8ft), still stand, defining the forecourt. A further outlying stone of 2m (6½ft) stands to the

southwest. In 2006, a cup-and-ring mark was found on the capstone. Excavations in 2011 and 2012 demonstrated various phases of activity, and identified that an apparently natural outcrop in the forecourt is in fact a quarried stone. It also revealed the original location of the immense capstone: a large pit, found beneath the forecourt, which was then partly backfilled before the construction of the tomb.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

PARC-Y-MEIRW Alt Name: **Four Stones**

Stone Row | Nearest Village: **Llanychaer**

Map: **SM 9988 3591** | Sheets: **OL35 L157** | Lat: **52.20294N** | Long: **3.23641W**

Originally at least eight stones stood in this 48.7m (160ft) row aligned northeast–southwest. Four remain standing, with two acting as gateposts and the other two in the hedge beside the road. Two further fallen stones are in the bank.

The tallest stone is 2.7m (8ft 10in); the shortest 2m (6½ft).

BEDD MORRIS

Standing Stone | Nearest Town: **Newport**
Map: **SN 0382 3650** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **51.99222N** | Long: **4.85881W**

This 1.8m (6ft) standing stone was toppled by a car in 2011, giving archaeologists the opportunity to confirm its Bronze Age origin (which previously had been in some doubt). It was reerected in 2012. The stone has been used as a boundary marker, and is also carved with an OS benchmark.
Its name refers to a legend about a highwayman called Morris, who lived in a cave on Carn Ingli. His career came to an abrupt end when he was ambushed by angry locals and hanged at the roadside. His captors are said to have later put up the stone on the spot where he died as a warning to others.

CARREG COETAN ARTHUR

Burial Chamber | Nearest Town: **Newport**
Map: **SN 0603 3935** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **52.01857N** | Long: **4.82824W**

A charming dolmen close to the centre of Newport (Pembrokeshire). The capstone is supported by two of the four uprights and tilts at a dramatic angle, perhaps echoing the outline of Carn Ingli to the south. Excavations found cremated bone here, as well as sherds of Beaker ware and grooved ware.

MAP

TREFAEL STONE

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Brynberian**
Map: **SN 1029 4028** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **52.02858N** | Long: **4.76662W**

At least 70 cup-marks are visible on this lavishly decorated stone, sited alone in a field. Investigation in 2014 confirmed that this tilted slab of bluestone, about 2.3 × 2m (7ft 6in × 6½ft), was once the capstone of a burial chamber that had been deliberately reused as a standing stone, the other stones and most of the cairn material having long since been repurposed as field walls. It has been suggested the site may be much older than originally thought – some believe it to have been in use for at least 5,500 years. Beads were found here as well as cremated bones, the remains of a cist, and pottery sherds.

Photo by Adam Stamford © Aerial-Cam Ltd

PENTRE IFAN

Portal Dolmen | Nearest Village: **Brynberian**

Map: **SN 0994 3702** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **51.999N** | Long: **4.77004W**

It's hard to imagine a more dramatic and spectacular monument than Pentre Ifan, star of countless calendars and book covers. The immense 16 tonne (17.5 ton) capstone is tilted on its three supporting uprights, sitting so gracefully it's impossible not to be impressed by the skill of the people who constructed this tomb. And if you've visited any of the other chambered tombs in the area, its size will come as a shock, the supporting uprights reaching about 2.5m (8ft) high. The entrance to the chamber is obstructed by a blocking stone, and there is a semi-circular forecourt at the southern end. Also visible are the remains of a cairn around 30m (98ft) long.

Nearby | At SN 1165 3614, 1.9km (1¼ miles) ESE of Pentre Ifan, **Craig Rhos-y-felin** was suggested, in 2011, as a possible source of the Stonehenge rhyolite bluestones. Evidence from Mike Parker Pearson's excavation here, which was analysed by Rob Ixer and Richard Bevins, does reveal a geochemical match for the rhyolite bluestones, making it a likely quarry site. Geomorphologist Brian John (see page 224), however, suggests that the archaeologists may have misinterpreted natural features and could have mistaken a prehistoric hunters' camp at Rhos-y-felin for a quarry.

A Phenomenological Approach to Dolmens

Vicki Cummings, Reader in Archaeology at the University of Central Lancashire

Dolmens are early Neolithic stone monuments where the main focus appears to have been on the lifting up and display of a large capstone. They were sometimes used for the deposition of the dead, but this does not seem to have been their primary function (see introduction, pages 18–19). Instead, the builders of these sites seem to have wanted to demonstrate their prowess at raising and supporting massive stones. These sites have capstones that are far in excess of the size required simply to create a stone box for burial. The largest dolmen, Browne's Hill in County Carlow in Ireland, has a capstone that weighs over 100 tonnes (110 tons).

A phenomenological approach that considers how people experience things, and how our own experiences of sites may enable us to gain insights into those of the people who built and used them, may help to shed light on the motivations of those who worked with these massive capstones. Most dolmens have their capstone supported by just three uprights. This creates an amazing effect: an enormous stone seemingly almost floating in the sky. Because the stone chosen as the capstone was often a thick and chunky object, the effect of a massive stone lifted up in the air is further enhanced – this was almost certainly deliberate on the part of the builders. Likewise, the stones used to support the capstone are often thin and slender, with just the very smallest part possible touching the underside of the capstone. Again, this was surely deliberate, done to enhance the effect of lifting up a large stone. It is hard to imagine how people with only Stone Age technology were able to lift up such massive stones. Visitors to these sites today often express amazement, and I think this is exactly what the builders intended. These were people who, after all, had very little experience of built architecture – these dolmens would surely have appeared all the more incredible in prehistory.

It is also worth considering where these sites were located in the landscape. Much has been written on the landscape setting of sites.

Dolmens are rather unusual compared to other early Neolithic chambered tombs because they are located in a range of settings. Although this must have been in part down to the availability of suitable stones, we know that the landscape was, in many places, literally covered with glacial erratics deposited by the ice sheets, so the monument builders had plenty of rocks to choose from. In some areas stones close to the summit of hills were picked – this is the case with many of the Cornish dolmens (known as "quoits"). However, while these sites were apparently deliberately skylined, some of the dolmens in southeast Ireland are tucked away at the bottom of stream valleys. These are harder to find, and when you do come across them, it is quite a surprise.

Some sites are also located in relation to other features that may well have been important to people in the Neolithic. Natural features such as rocky outcrops are often visible, as at Pentre Ifan, and it is hard to imagine that people in the Neolithic did not think of these as special, perhaps as the homes of spirits or otherworldly beings.

TAFARN-Y-BWLCH Alt Name: **Waun Mawn**

Standing Stones | Nearest Village: **Brynberian**

Map: **SN 0813 3370** | Sheets: **Ol35 L145** | Lat: **51.96856N** | Long: **4.79451W**

Two standing stones, both 1.3m (4ft 3in) high, which lean pleasingly to the north. They are perhaps the remains of a stone circle or burial chamber.

Nearby | At SN 0803 3394, 260m (853ft) northwest of Tafarn-y-bwlch, **Waun Mawn West** is a beautiful 2.3m (7½ft) standing stone in a stunning moorland setting with views over the Preseli hills.

At SN 0835 3405, 413m (1,355ft) northeast of Tafarn-y-bwlch, **Waun Mawn Northeast** has one 1.6m (5ft 3in) standing stone and three fallen ones. The stones were possibly part of a large stone circle, and research is ongoing at this site.

MAP

BEDD-YR-AFANC

Passage Grave | Nearest Village: **Brynberian**
Map: **SN 1079 3458** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **51.97738N** | Long: **4.75632W**

With spectacular views over the Preseli Mountains, this is thought to be the only gallery grave in Wales. A long cairn, 15 × 11.5m (49 × 38ft), encloses the two parallel rows of stones that form the chamber. The site can be hard to find as the stones are small, up to 0.4m (1ft 3in) high. Bedd-yr-afanc means “grave of the water monster”, referring to a creature said to have once inhabited the nearby River Brynberian. Be aware that the terrain can be very boggy and hard to cross; take care, especially following wet weather.

Photo by Adam Stanford © Aerial-Cam

CWM GARW Alt Names: **The Stones of Arthur’s Sons, Cerrig Meibion Arthur, Glynsaithmaen N**

| **Standing Stones** | Nearest Village: **Maenclochog**

Map: **SN 1182 3102** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **51.94576N** | Long: **4.73939W**

"These stones are said to be a monument to King Arthur's sons, killed by a wild boar." "Paulcall"

A fine stone pair, rising to 2.6m (8½ft) and 2.2m (7ft 2in), the narrower stone leaning at quite an angle. You can see them from the road (unless the mist is down).

Nearby | Around SN 115 305, 610m (2,000ft) southwest of Cwm Garw, are the remains of the **Glynsaithmaen** megalithic complex, where two stone circles linked by an avenue once stood. Surviving stones can be seen near Glynsaithmaen farmhouse, lying in the farmyard, and on both sides of the road running southwest to Gate Farm.

At SN 1282 3154, 1.1km (0.6 mile) ENW of Cwm Garw is **Carn Sian**, identified as a possible cairn, perhaps incorporating a more recent enclosure around a prehistoric site. There's a linear feature right next to it, and a possible burial chamber 134m (440ft) ESE at SN 1294 3147. All these features were identified by Megalithic Portal members, and they have been included here to show that there are many sites still waiting to be found in the area – and by amateurs!

MAP

Photo © Aled Owen-Thomas

CARN MEINI

Ancient Quarry | Nearest Village: **Mynachlog-ddu**
Map: **SN 1441 3248** | Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **51.95976N** | Long: **4.70249W**

Quarrying is said to have begun at Carn Meini during the seventh millennium BC. These outcrops were first suggested as a source of the Stonehenge bluestones in the mid-19th century, and petrological analysis in the 1920s confirmed that spotted dolerite bluestones originated in the Preseli Mountains. Whether the Carn Meini outcrops were the main quarry or just one of a number of sources, and indeed whether the Stonehenge bluestones were quarried here or simply carried to Wiltshire by glaciation, remains controversial (see page 224).

A 2002 survey identified an enclosure on the upper part of the Carn Meini outcrop, which contains dolerite naturally fractured into columns. Partly worked megaliths scattered around may be prehistoric or more modern, as building materials, gateposts and lintels have been quarried here more recently.

At SN 1403 3262 is the rather ruinous Carn Meini chambered tomb, on the central bluestones outcrop at the head of the “river of stones”. The uprights have all collapsed, and the 3 × 2.5m (10 × 8ft) capstone lies on a cairn, which is about

15m (49ft) in diameter and 1.5m (5ft) high. A remaining upright in the cairn may be part of the passage. The cairn stones are all very loose, so be careful.

Nearby | At SN 1305 3251, 1km (0.6 miles) west of Carn Meini tomb, this "circle", known as **Bedd Arthur** or Arthur's Grave, is really a horseshoe-shaped setting, some 18 × 7m (59ft × 23ft), the 13 stones (average height 0.8m/2ft 7in) backed by a low bank, and inclined to lean in to the centre. It overlooks the bluestones outcrops of Carn Meini, and the unusual shape has led to speculation that it might have inspired the famous Stonehenge bluestone horseshoe. There has been some suggestion it might be a henge, or related monument. At SN 1283 3328, 1.8km (just over 1 mile) WNW of the Carn Meini outcrop, is **Carngoedog**, which some have identified as the main source of the Stonehenge spotted dolerite bluestones, instead of Carn Meini.

Stonehenge and the Glacial Transport Theory

Brian John, an earth scientist with a special interest in the Ice Age

Despite the commonly held assumption that the Stonehenge bluestones were moved by human agency from Wales to Wiltshire, there are a number of features at the site that point toward the glacial transport theory. First, there are the bluestones themselves. Recent geological studies show that the stones have come from at least 20 different locations in West Wales, making it unlikely that they were deliberately quarried.

It is often claimed that the bluestones are all pillars, selected for setting upright in the ground. But if you look at the fallen stones, the standing stones and the stumps, they come in all shapes, sizes and lithologies. Boulders and slabs are far more common than pillars. The surfaces of the bluestones are heavily abraded – quite unlike the fresh surfaces that would be expected on quarried stone.

The probable Welsh locations from which the bluestones originate are on the rising slope of the Preseli uplands, where there is abundant evidence of intense glacial activity. It is consistent with glaciological theory to propose that these locations were subject to plucking and block entrainment by overriding glacier ice moving from northwest to southeast during the Anglian glaciation.

There are just 43 bluestones at Stonehenge, as against the 82 assumed to have been present originally. It's my view that Stonehenge was never completed. The builders gathered up the stones from the immediate vicinity, and then ranged further afield, using every stone they could find. They eventually gave up on the whole project when the labour costs got too high. So could the ice of the Irish Sea Glacier have reached Stonehenge? Undoubtedly, yes. Computer modelling studies in recent years have shown that a fully developed Irish Sea Glacier could have overwhelmed Lundy and the Isles of Scilly, pressed across the coasts of Cornwall and Devon, and pushed on to Salisbury Plain. Evidence on the ground is more difficult to interpret. Pre-Devensian glacial deposits are known from the Bristol and Bath area, but on Salisbury Plain there are no known glacial deposits. But does that mean there was no glaciation here?

Detailed field research is difficult because of the extensive military presence. There are fragments and cobbles all over the place, assumed to have come from destroyed bluestone monoliths. They might just as well have come from glacial deposits, given that any glaciation would have been around 450,000 years ago.

Another line of argument is related to the supposed absence of erratic material in the river terraces of the Salisbury area. Christopher Green claimed he had examined 50,000 pebbles and found only 1 per cent of erratic material – far less than might be expected. However, it appears that he was searching only for quartz pebbles, and that the area examined was of very limited extent. The glaciation of Salisbury Plain was certainly possible from a glaciological standpoint, and there is clear evidence of glaciation well to the east of the Somerset coast. What we still do not know is the precise extent of the ice.

John, B. 2018. *The Stonehenge Bluestones*. Pembrokeshire: Greencroft Books

Healing Stones? The Preseli Bluestones

Julie Kearney, who researches the links between consciousness, creativity and natural energies

In the midst of the giant sarsens at Stonehenge is an inner horseshoe of smaller stones known as the Stonehenge bluestones. These include a variety of rock types; as well as the dolerites from Preseli, and rhyolites from the north Pembrokeshire coast, some, including the Altar Stone, are sandstones from the Senni Beds, many miles from Preseli. While most archaeologists argue that these were quarried and manually transported (not simply moved by glacial action – see opposite), the exact location of the original quarries is still in dispute.

It has been accepted since the 1920s that the spotted dolerite bluestones came from the Preseli Mountains. Timothy Darvill and the late Geoffrey Wainwright proposed evidence for a bluestone quarry site at Carn Meini, citing a match between the shape and size of stones quarried there and those at Stonehenge. Although no convincing geological evidence has been identified to prove that the Carn Meini quarry provided the dolerite bluestone pillars, a chemical match *has* been made between the rhyolite bluestones and the quarry site at Rhos-y-felin (see page 220).

There is little consensus on when the bluestones were quarried, with theories ranging from the early Neolithic to 2300BC. Some evidence suggests that they were originally part of a monument in Wales before being taken down and transported to Wiltshire, but most researchers do now agree that the bluestones were set in place at Stonehenge around 2900BC. How they were moved is still in dispute. But perhaps an even more important question is, why were they moved?

While Mike Parker Pearson argues that the motivation for moving the bluestones such a distance was related to their significance as symbols of ancestral identity, with stones possibly representing deceased ancestors, Darvill and Wainwright suggest another possible reason – that the dolerite stones have a long and respected tradition as healing stones and were moved to build a Neolithic healing monument. Citing Welsh mythology, they connect the bluestones to the holy Welsh healing wells and speculate that a Welsh healing cult migrated eastward, finally establishing a

monument at Stonehenge. While the authors agree that Stonehenge was probably multifunctional and also had an astronomical purpose, they believe that the healing properties of the stones would have been the main focus, drawing Neolithic people from all over Europe to visit them.

Additional evidence for the existence of a Stonehenge healing sanctuary is based on the number of Neolithic bodies buried in the vicinity that bear the marks of serious injuries or illness; Geoffrey Wainwright speculated that the Amesbury Archer came all the way from Switzerland to be healed after falling from his horse, but died of a tooth abscess before being buried not far from Stonehenge. The number of bluestone/dolerite chips found in graves and scattered in the area is also notable.

For more information see: Parker Pearson, M. *et al.* "Craig Rhos-y-felin: A Welsh Bluestone Megalith Quarry for Stonehenge" *Antiquity*. http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/121403/1/121403.pdf

GORS FAWR Alt Name: **Cylch-y-trallwyn**

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Crymych** | Map: **SN 1346 2938**
Sheets: **OL35 L145** | Lat: **51.93158N** | Long: **4.71467W**

A lovely if often rather marshy stone circle ("Gors Fawr" means "a large area of boggy ground"), and the only one to survive in the area. In a moorland setting beneath the Preseli Mountains, eight of the 16 stones in the 22.3m (73ft) circle are spotted dolerite bluestones from Carn Meini to the north (see page 223). The tallest stones, in the south, are around 1.4m (4½ft). Antiquarian reports indicate an avenue once led to the two outliers 134m (440ft) to the NNE. These two stones are positioned on a northeast–southwest alignment, pointing toward midsummer sunrise. The circle can get quite overgrown with vegetation in summer, which can make viewing the stones and navigating the boggy terrain more difficult.

Photo © Paul Blades

Mid Wales

Ceredigion

MAP

DOLGAMFA

Kerb Cairn | Nearest Village: **Devil's Bridge**
Map: **SN 7457 7917** | Sheets: **E213 L135** | Lat: **52.39615N** | Long: **3.84482W**

What's left here, in a spectacular Ceredigion moorland setting, is a delightful oval 5 × 4m (16 × 13ft) of 11 uprights – once a cairn kerb. The stones lean out from the centre, where a slight hollow may mark the site of a cist.

"Park at Ysbyty Cynfyn, and cross a pretty gorge by a scary bridge – a fairly strenuous walk but worthwhile." Christopher Bickerton

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

BUWCH A'RLLO Alt Names: **Y Fuwch a'r Llo, The Cow and Calf**

Standing Stones | Nearest Village: **Bow Street**

Map: **SN 7229 8335** | Sheets: **E213 L135** | Lat: **52.43316N** | Long: **3.87993W**

Known as the Cow and Calf, this stone pair are chunky boulders 4m (13ft) apart, located beside the track. The Cow is about 2 × 1.25m (6½ft × 4ft), while the squatter Calf is 1.2 × 1.2m (4 × 4ft).

Nearby | At SN 7217 8333, in the plantation and 120m (394ft) west of Buwch a'r Llo, is a third stone, **Maen Tarw**. This was sliced into by forestry machinery at some point in the 20th century. Within 1km (0.6 miles) are further standing stones, rows and cairns. It has been suggested that the stones mark a Bronze Age trackway to the west coast.

BEDD TALIESIN

Round Cairn | Nearest Village: **Tal-y-bont**

Map: **SN 6714 9121** | Sheets: **OL23 L135** | Lat: **52.50255N** | Long: **3.95877W**

Accessibly located beside the road, this kerb cairn contains a 2m (6½ft) long cist with a dislodged capstone. The capstone is inscribed with historical graffiti that can be seen in low light. Legend tells that this is the grave of the bard Taliesin, and also, as at Tinkinswood (see page 206) and Maen-ybardd (see page 251), that spending the night here will result in going mad or becoming a poet!

Powys

MAP

CARREG CADNO Alt Name: **Fox Rock**

Stone Rows | Nearest Village: **Glyntawe**
Map: **SN 8767 1569** | Sheets: **OL12 L160** | Lat: **51.82849N** | Long: **3.63144W**

Discovered in 2014 by Simon Charlesworth and Dr Peter Hodges and disputed by some, this pair of crude stone rows in Powys, approximately at right angles to each other, share the same stone at the apex of the rows. The NNE row resembles the nearby Saith Maen SE row. It’s been suggested that when stones 1–3 of the EW row are viewed from a notch in stone 4, their profile appears to mimic the horizon.

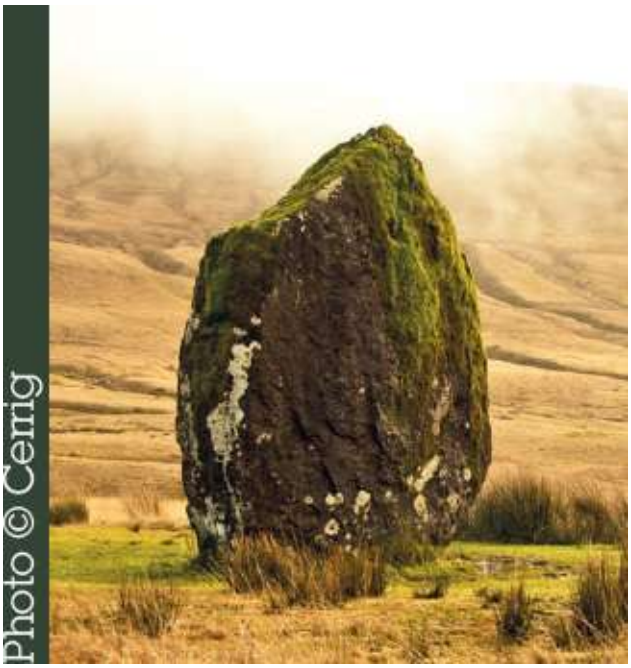
Photo © Simon Charlesworth

Nearby | At approx SN 862 146, 1.8km (just over 1 mile) WSW of Carreg Cadno, is the disputed **Saith Maen SE row**, where the stones appear to have been deliberately placed on the bare rock. The walk there is a very difficult 1.6km (1 mile) across scree slopes, bogs and dense, tussocky grass. At SN 8642 1483, 321m (1,053ft) ENE of the Saith Maen stone row, and on similarly difficult rocky or boggy ground, is **Saith Maen East Cairn**, also known as Sem's Cairn. Another site discovered by Charlesworth and Hodges, this damaged round cairn, just 3.7m (12ft) in diameter and 0.6m (2ft) high, can be difficult to spot at first, but once you know where to look, is visible from over 6.4km (4 miles) away.

MAEN LLIA

Standing Stone | Nearest Village: **Ystradfellte** | Map: **SN 9242 1919**
Sheets: **OL12 L160** | Lat: **51.86085N** | Long: **3.56367W**

A truly beautiful and impressive standing stone in a fine, if very remote and desolate, position on the moorland of Fforest Fawr. It's an imposing 3.8m (12ft 4in) tall, 2.8m (9ft 2in) wide and 0.9m (3ft) deep.



Nearby | At SN 9232 1896, 246m (807ft) SSW from Maen Llia, is **Llech Lia** multi-banked henge. It's overgrown and can be difficult to find, although the wimberry bushes that grow all over it are a bonus if you go when the fruit is in season. The henge is roughly circular, about 22m (72ft) in diameter, and with a possible entrance to the east.

"A common legend attached to standing stones is that at some point during the year, they go to drink at a nearby stream or lake. At midsummer sunset, the shadow of Maen Llia is at its longest, stretching down the hill, through the stream and onto a cairn-topped hillock. The shadow does indeed look like a tongue. Considering the alternative translation for Llia, which is 'to lick or lap', then Maen Llia is literally 'the stone that licks'. A deliberate part of the design, or was it noticed after the stone was raised, and the name came from that?" Cerrig

PEN-Y-FAN

Summit Cairn | Nearest Village: **Libanus**
Map: **SO 0120 2159** | Sheets: **OL12 L160** | Lat: **51.88409N** | Long: **3.43687W**

From the car park on the A470, it’s about an hour’s trek uphill to the cairn on the summit of Pen-y-fan, at 886m (2,906ft) the highest peak in southern Britain. On a clear day the views over the whole Brecon Beacons range, and as far as the Bristol Channel, are breathtaking. The cairn was rebuilt after excavation in 1991, when a bronze brooch and a spearhead were found inside the chamber.

Nearby | At SO 0075 2133, 519m (1,706ft) WSW of Pen-y-fan’s summit (and accessible via footpaths), is the **Corn Ddu** cairn. This is southern Britain’s second-highest peak.

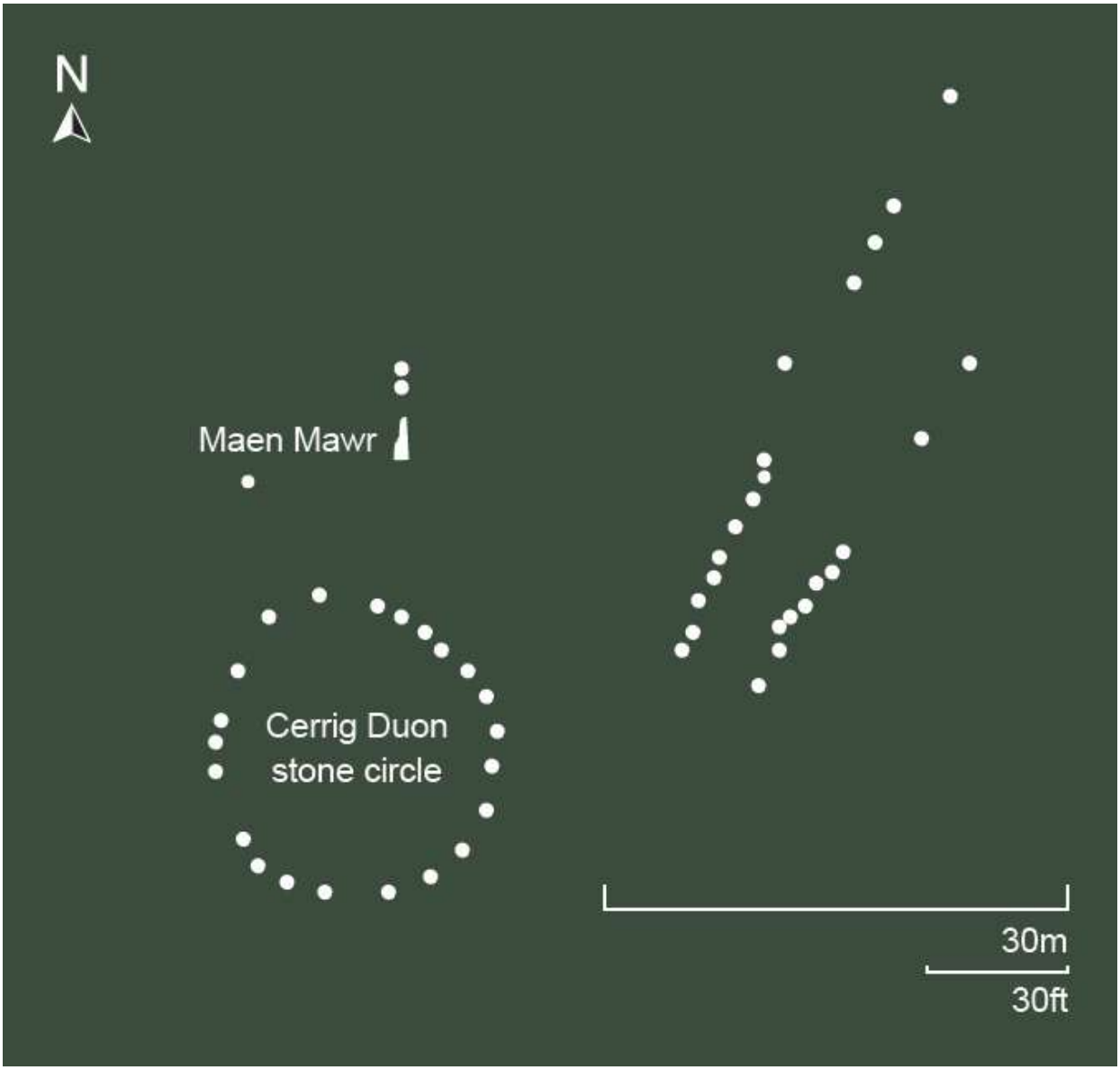
MAP

MAEN MAWR & CERRIG DUON

Megalithic Complex | Nearest Village: **Abercraf**
Map: **SN 8513 2066** | Sheets: **OL12 L160** | Lat: **51.87264N** | Long: **3.66993W**

"The stone rows can be nearly impossible to locate when there is any vegetation cover, even if you know where to look!" Simon Charlesworth

On beautiful and remote moorland in the upper reaches of the Tawe valley, this complex of apparently contemporaneous monuments includes the Maen Mawr standing stone – the largest in a short alignment – as well as the Cerrig Duon stone circle and a double stone row. Nearby is another standing stone and (apparently unique in Wales) a quincunx formation. To get to the site from the road, you need to wade across the Tawe, and then head uphill. The ground is often boggy, even on the hill. Look out for Maen Mawr, as the circle is only visible when you are right upon it.



MAEN MAWR

More than 1.8m (6ft) tall, the stone's name means "big stone". It has two much smaller companion stones, and together they possibly form a short stone row.

Photo © Angie Lake

CERRIG DUON

At SN 8511 2061, to the SSW of Maen Mawr, is the Cerrig Duon circle, around 18m (59ft) in diameter, with 20 small stones (none more than 0.6m/2ft in height). One of the stones has fallen. The hole in the circle's southern arc may be a socket for a stone that was still standing in the early 20th century.

DOUBLE STONE ROW

Around 15m (49ft) east of the circle a double stone row begins, running NNE to approximately SN 8520 2060. The western row extends for 42m (137ft), with 17 stones around 0.15m (6in) tall. The eastern row is 25m (82ft) long and has 12 tiny stones. You'll need to get your eye in for these, they really are very small indeed.

WAUN LEUCI STANDING STONE

At SN 8546 2150, just over 900m (less than ¾ mile) NNE of Maen Mawr, is Waun Leuci, an interesting and colourful lichen-covered stone with a classic playing card shape. Nearby, a little way down the slope, fragments of a fossilized beach can be seen on exposed slabs.

Photo © Cerrig

WAUN LEUCI STONE SETTING

At SN 8520 2156, 266m (873ft) west of the Waun Leuci standing stone and 900m (about ½ mile) north of Maen Mawr, is the recently discovered Waun Leuci or Maen Leuci stone setting. The only known quincunx outside the West Country, the setting comprises four stones set in a rough 3m (10ft) square around a central boulder.

Nearby | At SN 8555 2235, 1.7km (just over 1 mile) NNE of Maen Mawr, is **Bwllch Cerrig Duon** barrow, measuring around 24m (78ft) across and 2m (6½ft) high. It's listed as a "possible round barrow" on Coflein, but it's only about 30m (98ft) from the road so worth a look, especially as it is intervisible with so many other sites (including a surprising number of stone circles, passage mounds, cairns and standing stones) through gaps in the hilly horizon.

“The Waun Leuci setting is about 30m (98ft) west of the road, on open moorland close to a stream, hiding in tussocky grass. The only clue is the knee-high monolith that dominates the site.” Cerrig

MAP

NANT TARW

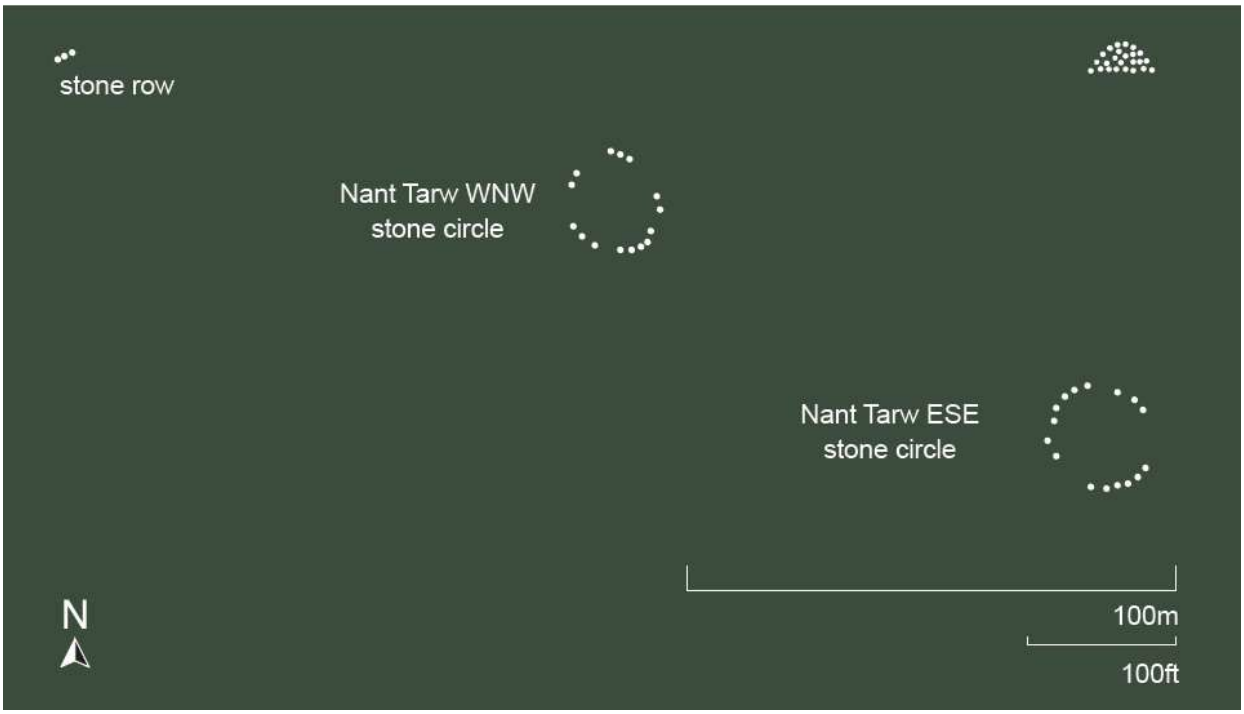
Megalithic Complex | Nearest Village: **Trecastle**
Map: **SN 8176 2587** | Sheets: **OL12 L160** | Lat: **51.91883N** | Long: **3.72056W**

Between the River Usk and its tributary Nant Tarw lies a Bronze Age ritual complex with two stone circles and an apparently contemporaneous stone row; its layout has been compared to that of Maen Mawr–Cerrig Duon (see above). As at Maen Mawr, the 3m (10ft) three-stone row at Nant Tarw (SN 8176 2587) has one large stone, now fallen, and two much smaller companions. The fallen stone is 2.7m (9ft) long; the others are 0.4m (1ft 4in) and 0.3m (1ft) respectively.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

NANT TARW WNW CIRCLE

At SN 8187 2583, some 100m (328ft) ESE of the row is the WNW (or River Usk) stone circle, measuring 19m (62ft) in diameter. There are 15 stones remaining, from 0.15m (6in) to 1m (3ft 3in), with four partly buried. A large recumbent stone lies some 3m (10ft) to the east.



NANT TARW ESE CIRCLE

At SN 8197 2578, some 100m (328ft) ESE of the WNW circle, is the Nant Tarw ESE (or Usk Reservoir) stone circle. An oval of around 22m (72ft), this is the larger of two rings. It has 12 stones, eight of which are fallen and five partly buried. The tallest stone is 1.2m (4ft) while the smallest is just 5cm (2in). The longest of the fallen stones is 1.5m (5ft). Some 30m (98ft) north of here is a further standing stone, on the bank of the Nant Tarw.

GODRE'R GARN LAS

At SN 8198 2587, some 90m (295ft) north of the ESE circle and just above the Nant Tarw river, is the ruined Godre'r Garn Las cairn, which may in fact be the remains of a pair of cairns.

CWRT-Y-GOLLEN Alt Name: **The Growing Stone**

Standing Stone | Nearest Village: **Crickhowell**
Map: **SO 2324 1686** | Sheets: **OL13 L161** | Lat: **51.84504N** | Long: **3.11565W**

A fine standing stone, 4.2m (13ft 9in) of red sandstone, set next to a magnificent

oak tree just inside the entrance of what was once an army training camp, off the A40. This was the tallest stone in the old county of Brecon.

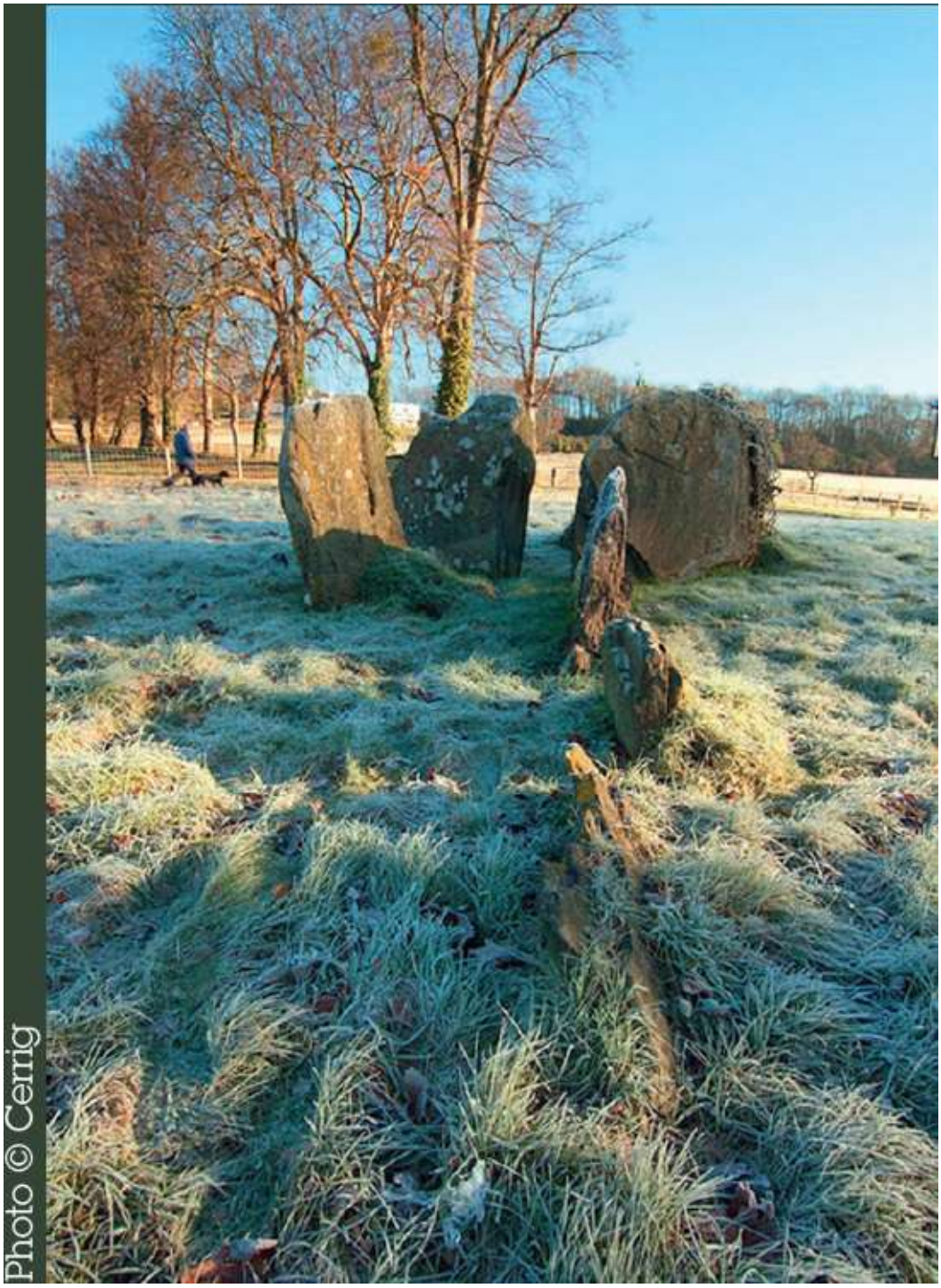
Photo © Angie Lake

Nearby | At SO 2396 1783, 1.2km (¾ mile) northeast of Cwrt-y-gollen, is the **Golden Grove Stone**, a blocky 1.2m (4ft) limestone pillar on private land by the Dragon's Head Inn car park. It's also known as the Druid's Altar, which is the name of the steep hill to the west.

GWERNVALE Alt Name: **Crickhowell**

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Crickhowell**
Map: **SO 2111 1922** Sheets: **OL13 L161** | Lat: **51.86593N** | Long: **3.1471W**

Right on the verge of the busy A40, this was once a fine Cotswold-Severn tomb, with a 45m (148ft) long barrow (now marked out by small concrete posts), three side chambers, and a horned forecourt and false portal at the southeast end. The only stone remains visible today are the central chamber, which was lined with large stone slabs, and parts of its long entrance passage leading to the southwest side (and into the road). Excavation in the 1970s demonstrated that the tomb was built on the site of previous settlement.



Nearby | At SO 2218 1846, 1.3km (¾ mile) ESE of Gwernvale, is the **Great Oak Stone**, also known as the Standard Street Stone. Impressively large and slab-like, it's about 2.3m (8ft) high and may have originally been part of a chambered tomb. In more recent times it seems to have served as a boundary marker and was once inscribed with the date 1844.

MAP

MYNYDD TROED

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Llangors**
Map: **SO 1614 2842** | Sheets: **OL13 L161** | Lat: **51.94792N** |Long: **3.22152W**

There’s not a great deal to see here, but the site is accessible (just about 100m/328ft from a parking place on the hillside at the top of the minor road between Llangors and the A479) – and the views are amazing. The badly disturbed turfed mound is about 20 × 15m (66 × 49ft) across and up to 1m (3ft 3in) in height. At the northern end, the remains of a chamber can be seen, and other edge-set stones are visible as well.

Nearby | At SO 1603 2774, 689m (less than ½ mile) SSW of Mynydd Troed chambered tomb, is **Cockit Hill**, where a (probable) promontory fort, with a 29m (95ft) long bank and ditch rampart, encloses a spur of Mynydd Llangorse.

PENYWYRLOD

Chambered Long Cairn | Nearest Village: **Talgarth**
Map: **SO 1505 3156** | Sheets: **OL13 L161** | Lat: **51.975988N** | Long: **3.238161W**

Penywyrlod was only discovered in 1972 when a farmer began to quarry stone from the mound and uncovered a chamber containing piles of human bone! One of the largest cairns in Wales, this massive structure is 52m (170ft) long and

22.5m (74ft) wide, and still 3m (10ft) tall. It is thought to have a Cotswold-Severn-type layout, with lateral chambers, a forecourt and a dummy portal. Quarrying has revealed some huge stones, one still upright and looking like a portal stone or chamber side stone, with others on the ground that could have been support stones or capstones. On the eastern side, near what would have been the barrow's original edge, are the remains of another chamber or passageway. There are probably several more chambers to be found. Excavations found worked flints and stone, a sheep femur with three holes, and the remains of 11 people, including an intact male skull that showed no obvious cause of death, but an inherited condition that would have caused him to have a broader than usual forehead. The sheep bone with holes could have been a simple flute or whistle, in which case it would be the oldest known musical instrument in Wales.

Bringing the Neolithic Back to Life

Martyn Copcutt, Chair of the Megalithic Portal Society and lifelong stones enthusiast

In 2005, a cast of the male skull from Penywyrlod was forensically reconstructed by Caroline Wilkinson of Dundee University. By painstakingly adding clay layer by layer to represent muscle, skin and hair, she created a realistic likeness of a face that could easily belong to someone living today.

The good condition of the man's teeth allowed analysis of the enamel. Samples from 10 others found in the tomb were also analysed, along with those of nine individuals from nearby Ty Isaf. The strontiumisotope analysis suggested that most of those buried at Penywyrlod did not source their childhood diet locally, but must have grown up at least as far away as the Malvern Hills in Worcestershire, if not further. One only made the journey to the Black Mountains after the formation of their wisdom teeth at around 14 years old. In fact, it's been suggested that the strontiumisotope ratios of the Penywyrlod individuals are similar to those recorded in northwestern France, potentially supporting the argument that Neolithic culture was brought to Britain by migration from this region. This group lived in the first few centuries of the fourth millennium BC, the time of the very first agriculture in Wales. In contrast, all the individuals from Ty Isaf – who were from the mid-to late fourth millennium, by which time agriculture was established – sourced their diet from the local region of mid-Wales.

For more information see: Neil, S. *et al.* 2017. "Land Use and Mobility During the Neolithic in Wales Explored Using Isotope Analysis of Tooth Enamel". In *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*. Available online at: dx.doi.org/10.1002/ajpa.23279

PEN-Y-BEACON Alt Name: **Blaenau**

Stone Circle | Nearest Town: **Hay-on-Wye**

Map: **SO 2393 3735** | Sheets: **OL13 L161** | Lat: **52.02932N** | Long: **3.11019W**

Previously identified as a cairn or burial chamber but now believed to be the remains of a 30m (98ft) stone circle. There seems to be an entrance with two radially set portal stones in the southeast. The largest stone, 1.5m (5ft) high and 1.1m (3½ft) wide, leans at a pronounced angle and a possible cup-mark has been identified by the OS benchmark. The other stones, visible near this stone and opposite, are much smaller, barely poking through the turf. The views to Hay Bluff and across the Wye valley are wonderful and a car park makes access easy.

Photo © Martyn Copcutt

PEN MAEN WERN

Standing Stone | Nearest Town: **Rhayader**
Map: **SN 8644 6201** | Sheets: **E200 L147** | Lat: **52.24452N** | Long: **3.23641W**

A large stone of white quartz on the summit of Pen Maen Wern. If you're lucky enough to be there when the sun is shining, the stone looks amazing. It's a stocky 1.5m (5ft) tall and 1.4m (4ft 7in) wide.

Photo © Paul Blades

MAP

LLANWRTHWL

Standing Stone | Nearest Town: **Rhayader**
Map: **SN 9757 6372** | Sheets: **E200 L147** | Lat: **52.26207N** | Long: **3.50221W**

An impressive 1.75m (5ft 7in) stone stands close to the south porch of St Gwrthwl's Church, Llanwrthwl. The circular form of part of the churchyard may indicate an ancient enclosure, suggesting, along with the stone, that this may be an example of a Christianized prehistoric site.

Nearby | At SN 9868 6614, 2.7km (1¾ miles) northeast of the standing stone at Llanwrthwl, is **Carn Wen** ring cairn. This badly damaged cairn is 7.9m (26ft) across and 1m (3ft 3in) high, with the remains of a substantial kerb as well as a cist. In 1844, an axe, a bracelet and other remains were found here; at the time a large stone was still standing in the middle of the cairn. Adjoining the cairn to the south is the monument known as the Druid's Circle, a 15m (49ft) banked enclosure, possibly a ring cairn, with a smaller circular structure inside it.

FOUR STONES

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Old Radnor**
Map: **SO 2457 6080** | Sheets: **E201 L137** | Lat: **52.240198N** | Long: **3.106079W**

A four-poster stone circle, the stones in a 5.3m (17ft 3in) ring and ranging in height from 1.4m to 1.8m (4ft 6in to 6ft). Legend tells that they mark the burial place of four kings killed in battle hereabouts. When the bells of Old Radnor church ring at night, the stones are said to stir to life and go down to nearby Hindwell Pool to drink.

Photo © Andy Spittle

Nearby | There is not much to see on the ground in the Walton Basin, but the area is home to a number of Neolithic palisades, cursuses and enclosures. At SO 2544 6072, 876m (just over ½ mile) east of Four Stones, is **Hindwell**, the largest palisaded enclosure found in Britain (the second largest in Europe), radiocarbon-dated to 2050BC. Some 1,400 oaks, 6m (20ft) tall, stood in a 2.35km (nearly 1½ mile) long circumference to enclose an area of 34ha (84 acres). At SO 2523 5996 is the 100m (328ft) **Walton Court** ring ditch, identified as a cropmark. There are other large ring ditches in the area, all dating from the middle

Neolithic. Two Roman camps overlie part of the site. At SO 2545 5990 is the **Walton palisaded enclosure**, one of the largest examples of its type in Britain, with a curved alignment of pits that can be seen as cropmarks. This alignment is thought to mark the western side of an enclosure measuring about 300m (984ft) across and is possibly associated with a double alignment of pits that appear to form an avenue to the southwest.

North Wales

Eglwys Gwyddelod

EGLWYS GWYDDELOD

Cairn Circle | Nearest Town: **Aberdovey**
Map: **SH 6626 0016** | Sheets: **OL23 L135** | Lat: **52.58312N** | Long: **3.97476W**

A small and little-known cairn circle in a beautiful, south-facing setting on the

slopes of Trum Gelli in Gwynedd. Its name means “church of the Irish”. The oval ring is 7m (23ft) in diameter with nine stones remaining, the largest 1m (3ft 3in) tall.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

ARTHOG

Stone Setting | Nearest Village: **Arthog**
Map: **SH 6526 1393** | Sheets: **OL23 L124** | Lat: **52.70621N** | Long: **3.99571W**

A rather mysterious stone setting in Gwynedd, which has been interpreted either as a stone circle or the remains of a cairn circle with a stone row. There are six stones grouped together, with a hole for a seventh; a further four stones are located about 2m (6½ft) away and include a striking quartz boulder. The tallest of the 10 surviving stones is 1m (3ft 3in). The remains of a cairn can also be seen to the west. Permission is required to enter the field. This site is at the heart of one of the most complex prehistoric landscapes in North Wales, with many

standing stones, cairns, stone rows and hill forts to visit within a few kilometres.

Photo © Peter Boyle

Nearby | At SH 6516 1325, 687m (just under ½ mile) south from Arthog, is **Planwydd Helyg** standing stone, 1.9m (6ft 2in) high and easy to spot from the footpath.

At SH 6617 1384, 912m (just over ½ mile) east of Arthog, is **Carreg-y-big** standing stone, unusually situated below a rocky outcrop and close to the National Trust car park. It's about 1.9m (6ft 2in) high and 1m (3ft 3in) wide and looks entirely different from every angle.

DYFFRYN ARDUDWY

Portal Dolmens | Nearest Village: **Dyffryn Ardudwy**
Map: **SH 5886 2284** | Sheets: **OL18 L124** | Lat: **52.78462N** | Long: **4.0942W**

Two portal dolmens stand 8.6m (28ft) apart on the remains of their cairn(s). The smaller one was built first and enclosed in an oval cairn; later this was incorporated into a trapezoidal cairn and a second, larger chamber was added to

the northeast, with a v-shaped forecourt. Finds include pottery fragments in a pit in front of the earlier tomb, and a stone pendant from the later tomb. In 2008 possible rock art was discovered: lines and notches pecked on the southern upright of the western chamber. Mysterious lights were reported in the area in 1904–5, which researcher Paul Devereux has attributed to seismic activity linked to the Mochras Fault that runs beneath the site, theorizing that the site was perhaps built to mark such phenomena. Local legend tells that one of the stones is one of three quoits thrown by Arthur from the top of nearby Moelfre, and bears the marks of his fingers.

GWERN EINION

Portal Dolmen| Nearest Village: **Llanfair**
Map: **SH 5873 2861** | Sheets: **OL18 L124** | Lat: **52.83633N** | Long: **4.09907W**

Within view of Moelfre mountain, like a dozen other sites in this part of Wales, this damaged but still dramatic portal tomb standing among ruined farm buildings has had an eventful life, having been robbed of its cairn, used as part of a wall and even as a shed, before being restored. The capstone is 2.4m (7ft 10in) at its highest point, and rests at a severe angle, on two 1.8m (6ft) portal stones and a 1m (3ft 3in) back stone. A standing stone is in the wall of the same field.

Photo by Adam Stanford © Aerial-Cam Ltd

Nearby | At SH 5833 2700, 1.7km (just over 1 mile) SSW of Gwern Einion and northwest of the church, are the two **Meini Hirion** standing stones. It's been speculated these are the remains of a stone circle. The stones are 2.3m (7½ft) apart and quite different in appearance; the taller, wedge-shaped stone is 3.25m (10ft 7in), while the other is 1.95m (6ft 4in).

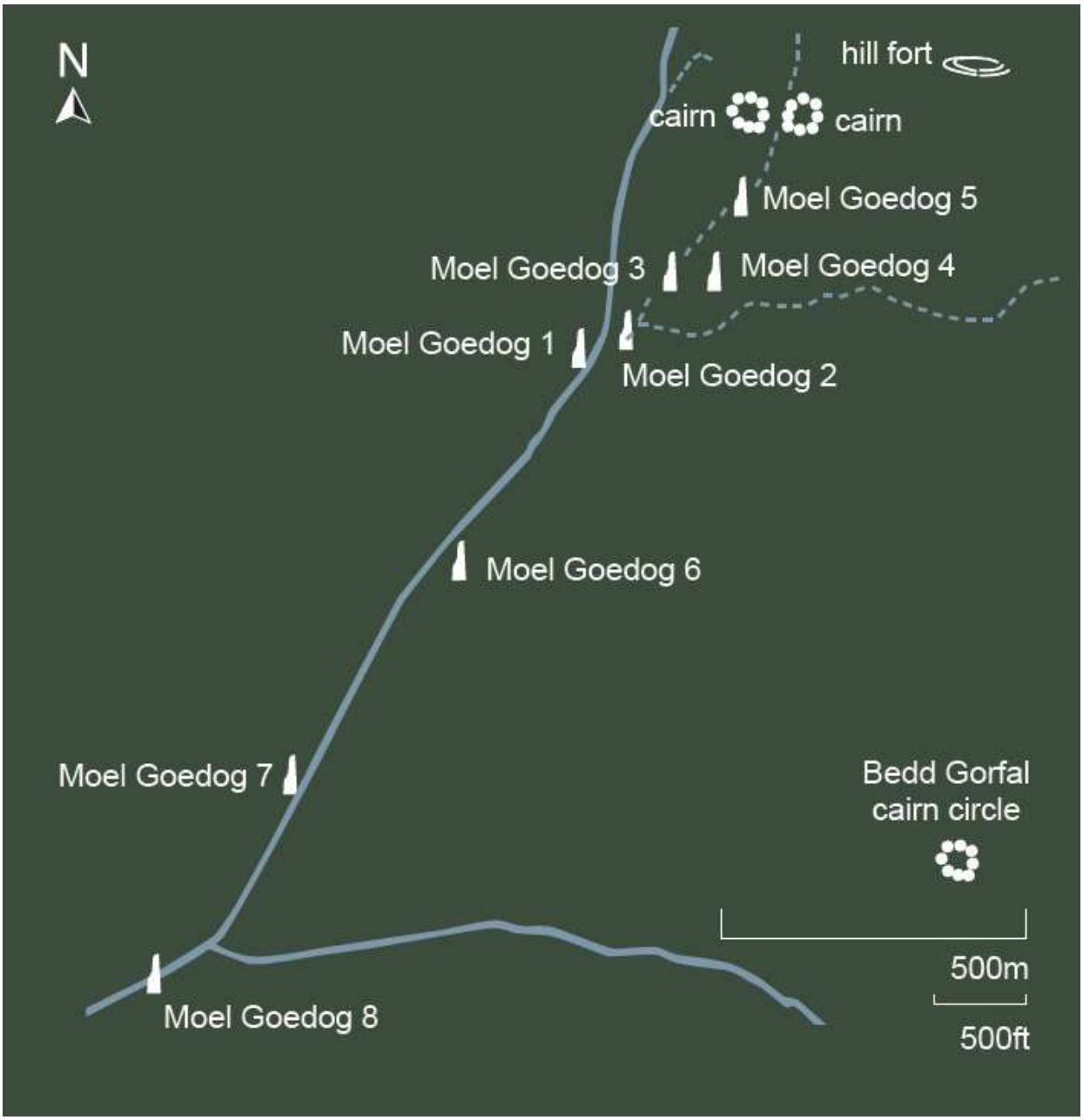
MAP

MOEL GOEDOG

Megalithic Complex | Nearest Town: **Harlech**
Map: **SH 5988 3097** | Sheets: **OL18 L124** | Lat: **52.85793N** | Long: **4.08258W**

On Moel Goedog, multiple standing stones mark what is thought to be part of the Fonlief Hir ancient trackway, which may have extended from the coast at Meini Hirion, Llanbedr, up to the summit of Moel Goedog. Also here are two ring cairns, a cairn circle and, at the summit, a late **Bronze Age hill** fort that

offers breathtaking views. The ditches and bank are worn, but enough remains to warrant a visit!



STANDING STONES

If approaching Moel Goedog on the road from the southwest, the standing stones are found in the following order:

Moel Goedog 8 (pictured, below) is at SH 5989 3096. This 1.8m (5ft 11in) stone is the first one reached on the road when approaching from the southwest. Moel Goedog 7 (at SH 6013 3130) is 413m (1,355ft) northeast of Moel Goedog 8. This is the tallest standing stone in the complex, at 2.2m (7ft 3in). Moel Goedog 6 (at SH 6040 3165) is a mere broken stump, 476m (1,562ft) northeast of Moel Goedog 7. Moel Goedog 1 (at SH 6068 3202) is reached 432m (1,417ft) northeast of Moel Goedog 6, just before the footpath up the hill splits off from the track. It is 1m (3ft 3in) high and leans slightly to the west. Moel Goedog 2 (at SH 6072 3203) is just 41m (135ft) east of Moel Goedog 1. This is a blocky stone 0.9m (3ft) high. Moel Goedog 3 (at SH 6081 3216) is 156m (512ft) northeast of Moel Goedog 2, while its pair, Moel Goedog 4 (at SH 6089 3216) is 80m (262ft) further east. The last standing stone is Moel Goedog 5 (at SH 6094 3229) 139m (456ft) NNE of Moel Goedog 4.

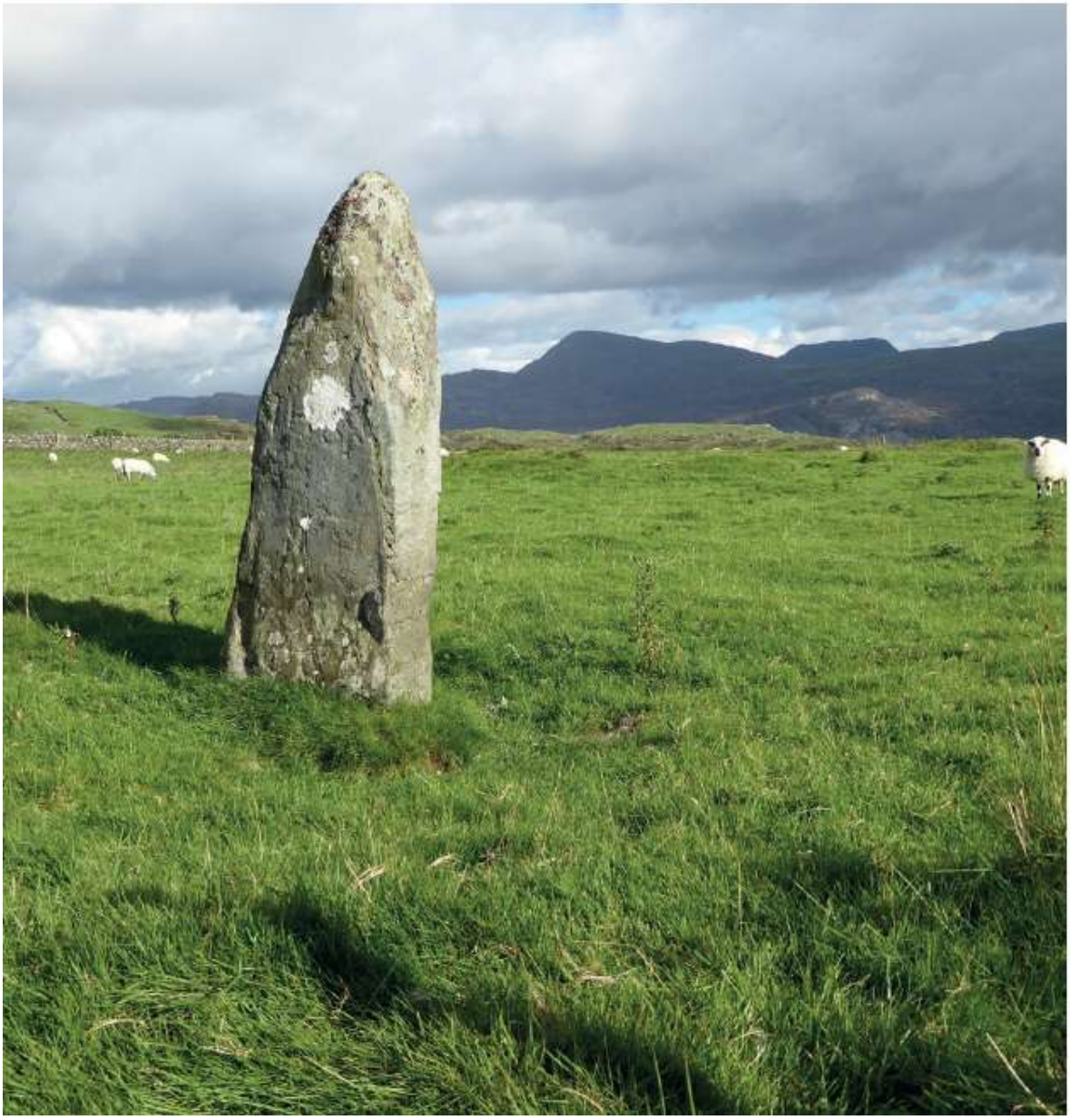


Photo © Martyn Copcutt

RING CAIRNS

Before you reach the summit with its hill fort, there are two ring cairns. Moel Goedog West (at SH 6105 3244) is 171m (561ft) NNE of Moel Goedog 5. It's about 6.5m (21ft) in diameter with stones (originally 12) up to 1m (3ft 3in) high. Excavation in 1978 uncovered pits containing charcoal and pots with cremations. Moel Goedog East (at SH 6104 3245) is 50m (164ft) east of Moel Goedog West, and thought to be contemporaneous. It has similar dimensions but smaller stones.

You can also take a look at the little-visited Bedd Gorfal cairn circle (at SH

6129 3114), on the slopes of Moel-y-gerddi, 1km (0.6 miles) ESE of Moel Goedog 6.

BRYN CADER FANER

Ring Cairn | Nearest Village: **Talsarnau**
Map: **SH 6479 3529** | Sheets: **OL18 L124** | Lat: **52.89799N** | Long: **4.0115W**

"An honesty box is by the car park above Eisengrug. The £2 fee goes to charity. The farmer is fed up with the fact that hardly anybody pays it, so please do … £2 is not excessive for one of the most spectacular monuments in Wales!" Eveline van der Steen

A famously spiky ring cairn in a fantastic upland setting – one of the star sites of North Wales. Of the original 30 stones, 15 remain, about 1.8m (6ft) tall, poking up from the cairn at dramatic angles, like jagged teeth or a crown of thorns. On a Bronze Age trackway, positioned for maximum visibility close to the summit of Bryn Cader Faner, it's a truly spectacular monument, despite the damage caused by Victorian treasure hunters (the cist has been destroyed) and being used as target practice in World War II. The long and boggy trek to get here is well worth the effort.

Photo © Jeanette Wright

Nearby | At SH 6409 3584, 888m (just over ½ mile) WNW of Bryn Cader Faner, are the **Y Gyrn** cairns. You can see the concentric rings of stones used to construct the upper (southern) cairn, and it also has a visible collapsed cist. The lower cairn has a kerb with some upright stones. If approaching Bryn Cader Faner from the west instead of the usual southern approach you will walk right in between these two cairns. There are hut circles further along the path. A map is needed.

MAEN TWROG

Standing Stone | Nearest Village: **Maentwrog**
Map: **SH 6640 4060** | Sheets: **OL18 L124** | Lat: **52.9461N** | Long: **3.98977W**

Possibly of prehistoric origin, this 1.1m (3ft 7in) pillar of non-local stone stands outside the church where it was thrown, according to tradition, from a nearby mountain by the giant St Twrog, destroying the pagan shrine that stood where the church is now. It's said the saint's thumb and finger marks can still be seen on the stone. It also appears in the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi, marking the burial place of Pryderi, king of Dyfed.

LLECH IDRIS

Standing Stone | Nearest Village: **Bronaber**
Map: **SH 7311 3108** | Sheets: **OL18 L124** | Lat: **52.8622N** | Long: **3.88625W**

A fine, elegant standing stone, leaning at a pleasing angle and with lots of colourful lichens. It's 3.1m (10ft 2in) tall by 1.5m (5ft) wide and only 0.3m (1ft) deep, with a classic chisel-shaped top. Legend has it that the giant Idris hurled the stone here all the way from the summit of Cadr Idris.

MAP

CIST CERRIG

Portal Dolmen | Nearest Village: **Morfa Bychan**
Map: **SH 5433 3841** | Sheets: **E254 L124** | Lat: **52.92328N** | Long: **4.16828W**

Located below Moel-y-gest with its hill fort (a recognizable point across half of western Snowdonia), this is an impressive though extremely ruinous portal tomb, with only three stones remaining. It resembles a giant armchair, or winged figure, depending where you're standing. The surviving stones are the portal uprights and the door slab; the chamber would have been to the west. There are cup-marks pecked into the sloping face of the rock outcrop to the southeast, and also on other rocks nearby. Difficult to get to; a 1:25,000 OS map is needed.

"From the buildings at Tyddyn-adi, go through the gate above you on the right. Cross the field following the obvious path and bear left at the junction, leaving the right of way. Follow the track until you go through a wall. Bear left toward another wall and you should see the monument on the other side." Roger K. Read

YSTUM CEGID ISAF Alt Name: **Coetan Arthur**

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Town: **Dolbenmaen**

Map: **SH 4988 4132** | Sheets: **E254 L123** | Lat: **52.9482N**| Long: **4.23577W**

A beautiful site, quiet and out of the way. Huddled beside the field wall, this pleasingly table-like burial chamber has a large capstone, about 4.5 × 3.3m (15 × 11ft), and four remaining uprights. In 1816, Edward Pugh recorded that the farmer had filled in the sides of the monument with stone walling in order to convert it into a sheepfold; he also mentioned the legend that (as at other sites), the capstone had been thrown by Arthur, but due to a slip of the foot, it had fallen wide of its mark. Can be tricky to find if approaching from Rhoslan. Instead, try walking via Ynys Ddu and Ystum Cegid Isaf farms.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

Nearby | At SH 4834 4088, 1.6km (1 mile) west of Ystum Cegid Isaf, is **Rhoslan** or Cefn Isaf, a chambered tomb in a field that's often full of buttercups, close to the road. Full of character, it has an immensely thick capstone.

MYNYDD CEFN AMLWCH Alt Names: Coetan Arthur, Cefnamwlch Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: Tudweiliog

Map: SH 2297 3454 | Sheets: E254 L123 | Lat: 52.87917N | Long: 4.63209W

A classic chambered tomb with a large capstone, 3 × 1.5m (10 × 5ft), supported by three uprights. Two quartz boulders lie beside it. Despite being rather tightly corralled by a fence to protect it from cattle, the site still has plenty of character and the views are lovely. This is another site associated with the legend of the quoit-throwing King Arthur. Easy to reach via a footpath from the road. There are other cairns nearby.

Nearby | At SH 2371 3283, 1.9km (just over 1 mile) southeast of Mynydd Cefn Amlwch, is the impressive 2.4m (8ft) high **Meyllteyrn** standing stone, covered with lichen and set in the graveyard of a now roofless church. Fantastic views.

At SH 2084 3253, in a field 2.9km (1¾ miles) WSW of Mynydd Cefn Amlwch, is **Llangwnnadl** standing stone, an imposing 3m (10ft) tall.

BACHWEN

Portal Dolmen | Nearest Village: **Clynnog Fawr**

Map: SH 4077 4948 | Sheets: E254 L123 | Lat: 53.01902N | Long: 4.37631W

A perfect dolmen with a fabulous decorated capstone, sited between the sea and the towering mountains, within sight of Tre'r Cieri hill fort – "the town of the giants". It's tightly fenced in but still highly atmospheric. The wedge-shaped capstone, 2.75 × 1.6m (9ft × 5ft 2in), is supported by four uprights, about 1.8m (5ft 10in) tall, and has 110 cup-marks on its upper surface, with eight more on the eastern edge. Many miracles are said to have occurred at the nearby St Beuno's chapel and well.

Nearby | At SH 4299 5107, 2.7km (just under 1¾ mile) ENE of Bachwen, is the **Penarth** chambered tomb, which is in a very ruinous state, the capstone having collapsed on one side. Great views across Caernarfon Bay.

MAP

Y GARN

Cairn | Nearest Village: **Beddgelert**
Map: **SH 5513 5262** | Sheets: **OL17 L115** | Lat: **53.05115N** | Long: **4.16276W**

The summit of Y Garn is home to two large cairns, perhaps the finest of the many mountaintop cairns in Snowdonia. These two are the furthest east of the five cairns strung along the Nantle ridge. The views of Snowdonia are wonderful, but reaching the ridge is hard going.

Nearby | At SH 5396 5469, 2.4km (1½ miles) northwest of Y Garn, is the **Mynydd Mawr** summit cairn, offering more wonderful views of Snowdonia. The cairn is 22m (72ft) in diameter and 2.5m (8ft 2in) high, with three more recent dry-stone shelters built into it.

SLING Alt Name: Yr Hen Allor

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Town: **Bethesda**
Map: **SH 6055 6695** | Sheets: **OL17 L115** | Lat: **53.18132N** | Long: **4.08819W**

A very ruinous tomb, extremely well-concealed in heavy undergrowth (a nearby telegraph pole may help in navigation). Its other name, Yr Hen Allor, means “old altar”.

Nearby | At SH 6348 6811, 3.1km (almost 2 miles) ENE of Sling and up on the summit of Moel Faban, you’ll find **three cairns in a line** along the ridge. A collared urn from the middle Bronze Age was found in one of them during excavation in the 19th century and is now in the British Museum. They’re all fairly ruinous, but in good weather the views up to the mountains and down to the straits and Anglesey are brilliant.

CARNEDD-Y-SAESON

Cairn | Nearest Village: **Abergwyngregyn**

Map: **SH 6783 7174** | Sheets: **OL17 L115** | Lat: **53.22619N** | Long: **3.98125W**

In beautiful surroundings, Carnedd-y-saeson (“cairn of the English”) has kerbing of two rows of concentric stones, and although damaged is the best example of its kind in North Wales. It’s around 14m (46ft) across and 0.3m (1ft) high, with another circle of stones in the interior, about 10.5m (34ft 5in) in diameter, and a large cist, 1.8 × 1.2m (6 × 4ft), the displaced cover of which is clearly visible. It lies in a fascinating prehistoric landscape with a wealth of hut circles, enclosures and stones.

Nearby | At SH 6674 7038, 1.7km (just over 1 mile) southwest of Carnedd-y-saeson, is the **Coed Aber** roundhouse, an Iron Age structure that excavation in 2009 confirmed had incorporated a pre-existing Bronze Age standing stone. The site was later reused as a corn-drying kiln. Can be accessed on a walk suitable for wheelchairs.

Anglesey

MAP

BRYN GWYN

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Brynsiencyn**
Map: **SH 4623 6693** | Sheets: **E263 L114** | Lat: **53.17716N** | Long: **4.30221W**

Photo © Eric Guile

Two enormous stones, the tallest on Anglesey and indeed in Wales, now rather casually sited in a hedge beside a gate. The taller stone is more pointed and slab-like, 4.2m (13ft 9in) high by 3.2m (10ft 5in) wide and 0.6m (2ft) thick, and once formed the gable end of a cottage. The second stone is blockier, 3.2m (10ft 5in)

high, 2.9m (9½ft) wide and 1.5m (5ft) thick. Excavations have found the base of a destroyed stone and holes for others, suggesting that this was once a circle, about 16m (52ft) across and with eight stones, confirming 18th-century reports of further stones here. As to what happened to the other stones, William Hutton wrote at the end of the 18th century that “ignorant country people, supposing money was hid under them, tore them up”. From Bryn Gwyn, the midsummer sun is seen to rise over the centre of Castell Bryn Gwyn (see below).

Nearby | At SH 4653 6706, 321m (1,053ft) ENE of the Bryn Gwyn stones, is **Castell Bryn Gwyn**, originally a henge or similar Neolithic enclosure, with a 5.2m (17ft) wide stony bank and a broad, flat-bottomed external ditch. Later it became a hill fort, with impressive earthworks that survive up to 2.6m (8½ft) high.

BODOWYR

Passage Grave | Nearest Village: **Llangaffo**
Map: **SH 4627 6816** | Sheets: **E263 L114** | Lat: **53.18825N** | Long: **4.30228W**

A charming tomb with a capstone perched on three uprights. There would originally have been a passage to the east. It’s close to the road, which makes it easy to access, and despite being fenced off is full of character.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

Photo © Gail Johnson

BRYN CELLI DDU Alt Name: **Black Grove Hill**

Passage Grave | Nearest Village: **Llanfairpwllgwyngyll**

Map: **SH 5075 7017** | Sheets: **E263 L114** | Lat: **53.20758N** | Long: **4.23623W**

Bryn Celli Ddu ("mound in the dark grove") is the most famous passage grave on Anglesey and indeed in Wales. A henge and a circle were built here first, in the Neolithic; the ditch survives. It's believed that the stones were removed (some smashed to pieces) around 1,000 years after the construction of the henge, and a passage grave built in the centre of the henge, the earth from the bank being used for the mound. Two of the stones were used as portal stones for the tomb. A 1.5m (5ft) stone inscribed with a swirling design was buried face-down in a pit; it's now in the National Museum of Wales and a replica stands outside the tomb in what was thought to be its original position in the henge. The passage, aligned to midsummer sunrise, leads to a polygonal chamber; within the chamber is a 2m (6½ft) standing stone that has been shaped into a rounded pillar. The mound covering the tomb is part of the restoration following the 1927–8 excavation; the original was probably much bigger, with a retaining wall of kerb stones. Excavations throughout the surrounding landscape are ongoing, co-led by Ffion Reynolds from CADW, and have resulted in some interesting discoveries, including a burial cairn (see below), part of a possible cairn cemetery and several examples of rock art, all within sight of the mound, as well as pits containing pottery.

The Reverend John Skinner, in his *Ten Days Tour Through the Isle of Anglesey* (1804), tells the story of a mysterious figure in white that appeared when the farmer, removing stone for building, first broke through into the chamber. He was frightened off (and who can blame him) but on returning found the figure was merely the pillar in the chamber. He was disappointed to find no treasure. Skinner adds: "The superstition of the common people still suppose this to be the habitation of spirits."

BRYN CELLI DDU CAIRN

At SH 5072 7012, in a field some 58m (190ft) southwest of the passage grave, are the remains of this Bronze Age cairn. First mentioned in 1802, it was destroyed to build a wall, and was mostly gone by 1847, as was a neighbouring cairn to the west. Recent work has been undertaken to more clearly understand the nature of the site.

Colour in the Monuments of Neolithic Europe

Penelope Foreman, a final year PhD researcher at Bournemouth University

Colour is a fundamental human experience – if not a universally constant one. There are individuals who are colour-blind to various degrees, and even some who see extra colours. However, there is something about the perception and categorization of colour that is near uniform across humanity, as evidenced by Brent Berlin and Paul Kay's *Basic Color Terms* and studies into the key mechanisms of colour vision.

I'm interested in trying to discover whether there are any commonalities, significant patterns or demonstrable signs of specific colour selection in Neolithic monuments, both in Wales and England and also in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands, that may hint at colour being an important part of Neolithic cosmology – regionally, locally or culturally.

As part of this project I will record the colour of individual stones via both human perception and through the use of a customdesigned digital recording device. The results will be used to generate coloured site plans for visual analysis of patterns, and also recorded in a database to allow for wider and more thorough statistical analysis.

The pilot study designed to test this methodology was conducted at Bryn Celli Ddu. Colour is a definite part of the experience of visiting this site. Entering the passage, you are faced with pale stones standing out of the red earth, dark corners, walls bright with flashes of quartz. The chamber is a space of contrasts. Two stones, almost black, face each other across the chamber, while a bright and quartz-rich stone shines and sparkles with reflected light. Pale grey stones with contrasting textures rise from the deep red soil and stand between these other stones, and a pale pillar stands in silent watchfulness in the chamber corner. The stones display contrasting colours and textures, which would have appeared even more pronounced without the presence of lichen and moss. Though the tomb is surrounded by blue schist outcrops that would have proved a convenient source for monument building stone, instead stones of

different colours, textures and shapes were selected and used in its construction.

Full conclusions can in no way be judged from a single site, but the evidence for colour being significant at Bryn Celli Ddu seems to point to a representation of the contrast between light and dark. If colour and light are related in this way, then further examples should be seen across Atlantic Europe – and my research is ongoing. The underlying theme of contrast may also yield potentially meaningful findings should it be found in other sites, with contrasting colours being used in significant areas of monuments to symbolize particular concepts or to designate areas of the site for specific purposes.

Foreman, P. *Colour Out of Space: Colour Usage in the Construction of Monuments of Neolithic Atlantic Europe* (forthcoming)

Details of Penelope's research are linked from the Megalithic Portal page for Bryn Celli Ddu.

BRYN CELLI DDU STANDING STONE

At SH 5063 7010, 139m (456ft) WSW of the passage grave, is this broad, almost rectangular stone, 1.8m (6ft 2in) wide and 1.3m (4ft 3in) tall. Rubbed smooth by endless sheep, it shares the same alignment as the passage grave. It's on private land, so seek permission from the farm.

Nearby | At SH 5032 7034, 464m (1,496ft) WNW of the passage grave, is the impressive 3.3m (11ft) **Tyddyn-bach** standing stone, set in a modern clearance cairn.

MAP

BRYN-YR-HEN BOBL

Chambered Cairn | Nearest Village: **Llanfairpwllgwyngyll**
Map: **SH 5189 6900** | Sheets: **E263 L114** | Lat: **53.197437N** | Long: **4.218666W**

Within the Plas Newydd estate, the country seat of the Marquesses of Anglesey, is the Bryn-yr-hen Bobl chambered cairn, its name meaning "hill of the old people". Skeletal remains were found here when the tomb was opened in the

mid-18th century. The chamber was restored and the mound altered after excavation in 1929–35 (when fragments of Neolithic pottery were found). You'll need permission to see the tomb close up (it is visible from the woods); apply to the estate managers, Jones Peckover, in Anglesey.

Nearby | At SH 5199 6972, 722m (just under ½ mile) north of Bryn-yr-hen Bobl, is the **Plas Newydd** burial chamber, also within the estate. Two chambers with capstones remain – one an enormous slab 11.5 × 9.5m (38 × 31ft) and 3.5m (11½ft) thick. There's no trace of the cairn or mound. Apply to the National Trust for access.

DIN DRYFOL

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Aberffraw**
Map: **SH 3956 7249** | Sheets: **E263 L114** | Lat: **53.22525N** | Long: **4.4042W**

Badly damaged but the stones are huge and the setting is a wonderful and unusual one on a ledge beneath a rocky outcrop. The tomb is oriented northeast–southwest, and originally there was one chamber, which was extended to four in several phases. During excavations in 1969–70 and 1980 traces of the cairn, 47–62m (154–203ft) by 14m (46ft), were found, along with cremated bone and pottery sherds. Interestingly, they also revealed that one of the chambers had a wooden portal "stone", which according to Frances Lynch is "rare but not unknown".

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

BARCLODIAD-Y-GAWRES

Passage Grave | Nearest Village: **Rhosneigr**
Map: **SH 3290 7074** | Sheets: **E263 L114** | Lat: **53.20738N** | Long: **4.50354W**

Barclodiad-y-gawres (“apronful of the giantess”) is a reconstructed passage grave with intriguing rock art. The mound was recreated with modern materials after excavation in 1952–3. From the forecourt a passage leads to a large chamber with three side chambers. These were roofed with capstones, one of which survives. The east and west chambers both have decorated end stones, and three further stones in the passage feature pecked designs of spirals, lozenges and zigzags, reminiscent of similar art in Ireland, Brittany and Spain, as well as of the patterned stone found under Bryn Celli Ddu (see page 244). Evidence of a fire was found in the central chamber, apparently put out with what has been described as a “witch’s brew” of reptile, fish and amphibian bones (it’s also been suggested these were simply the faeces of a resident otter), then a layer of pebbles and limpet shells. An appointment is needed to visit; consult www.cadw.gov.wales for details. Take a torch to view the art.

Photo by Adam Stamford © Aerial-Cam Ltd

TY NEWYDD

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Llanfaelog**
Map: **SH 3443 7387** | Sheets: **E263 L114** | Lat: **53.23597N** | Long: **4.48228W**

Despite the red brick supports, this is a lovely burial chamber, with a huge, cracked capstone, 4 × 1.8m (13ft × 5ft 10in) and 1.2m (4ft) thick. Supporting uprights survive. If the brick supports bother you, it is possible to find an angle where they won't show in a photo. It's thought there was a second chamber at the eastern end. The tomb is surrounded by little concrete posts, indicating the extent of the mound. Excavation in 1936 resulted in Bronze Age finds, demonstrating reuse of this Neolithic site.

Photo © Eric Grindle

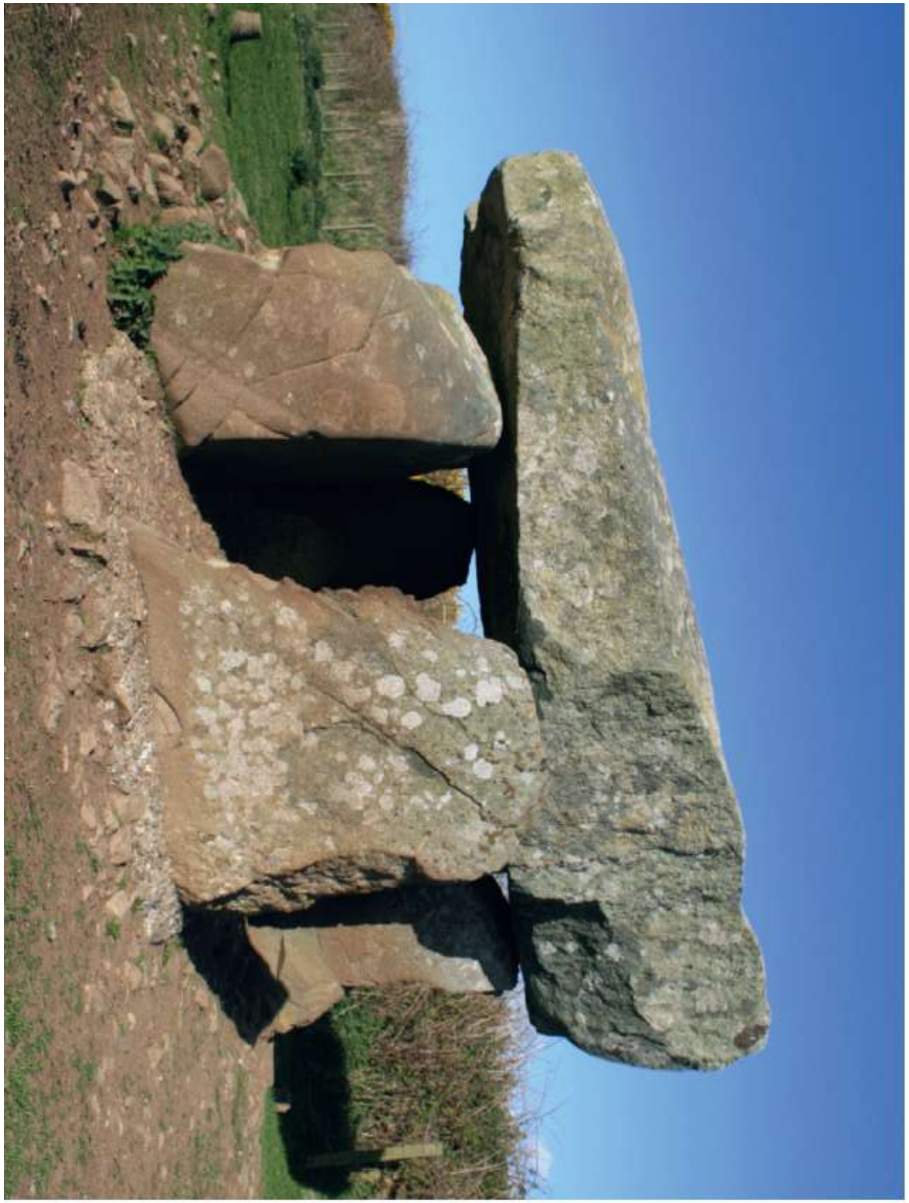


Photo © Christopher Bickerton

TREFIGNATH

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Town: **Holyhead**
Map: **SH 2585 8056** | Sheets: **E263 L114** | Lat: **53.2933N** | Long: **4.61436W**

Right beside the busy A55, overlooking the aluminium works, but still highly atmospheric. The huge capstone of the collapsed central chamber is broken in two; the eastern chamber, with its 2m (6½ft) portal stones, is more or less intact. The western chamber was the first of the three to be built, dated by stone tools and pottery sherds found here to *c*. 3750BC. The central chamber was added later, with a forecourt at the eastern end, and finally the eastern chamber was built over the forecourt, probably several hundred years later, before the site was covered by a cairn (most of that was removed in 1870).

Nearby | At SH 2539 8095, 600m (1,969ft) WNW, is **Ty Mawr** standing stone, in the middle of a recently developed industrial estate. It's an impressive stone, twisting upward, 2.7m (8ft 10in) high.

PENRHOS FEILW Alt Name: **Plas Meilw**

Standing Stones | Nearest Town: **Holyhead**
Map: **SH 2270 8094** | Sheets: **E262 L114** | Lat: **53.29566N** | Long: **4.66177W**

A wonderful pair, furry with lichen, easily accessed and with great views over Trearddur Bay and to the distant mountains (despite the houses nearby). They stand 3.3m (11ft) apart, both about 3m (10ft) tall. Local tradition tells of bones, spearheads and arrowheads found in a cist between the two stones, and even that they once stood at the centre of a stone circle, but no investigation has taken place to confirm this.

Photo © Drew Parsons

Nearby | At SH 2276 8165, 717m (½ mile) north, are the remaining three uprights of **Gorsedd Gwlwm** chambered cairn.

MAP

PRESADDFED

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Bodedern**
Map: **SH 3476 8089** | Sheets: **E262 L114** | Lat:**53.29912N** | Long: **4.48099W**

The two chambers of this tomb, 2.2m (7ft) apart, are both ruined but still impressive. The southern chamber is in a better state than the northern one, with a classic dolmen-like appearance and an impressive 4.2 × 3.3m (13ft 9in × 10ft 9in) capstone. Excavations in 2013 found the socket hole of a standing stone within the collapsed chamber, suggesting it stood there before the chamber was built. At some time in the 18th century, a family was living in the southern chamber.

Nearby | At SH 3406 8318, 2.4km (1½ miles) NNW of Presaddfed, is **Tre-gwehelydd** or Maenygoredd ("stone of the fish-weir"), a standing stone broken

in three, held together with bronze bands. It's 2.6m (8½ft) tall and 1.1m (3½ft) wide, in a fine location with great views. It was said that a second, buried stone lay nearby, although there's no sign of this. At SH 3180 8122, 3km (just under 2 miles) west from Presaddfed, is the 1.4m (4ft 7in) **Shop Farm** standing stone, on private land. Seek permission at the farm.

MEIN HIRION

Alt Names: **Llanfechell 1, Llanfechell Triangle Standing Stones** | Nearest Village: **Llanfechell**
Map: **SH 3640 9169** | Sheets: **E262 L114** | Lat: **53.3967N** | Long: **4.46199W**

A fine triangular setting in an exposed and windswept spot by the field wall, with great views. The stones are all tall (about 2m/6½ft) and lichen-covered, one with a notably curved profile.

Nearby | At SH 3699 9164, 595m (1,952ft) east of Mein Hirion, is the **Llanfechell 2** standing stone, about 2.1m (7ft) tall and 1.2m (4ft) wide. It leaned at an angle for many years before finally falling in 2009. During re-erection in 2010, a cup-marked rock was found to have been reused as a packing stone in the socket.

LLIGWY

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Moelfre**
Map: **SH 5013 8604** | Lat: **53.34994N** | Sheets: **E263 L114** | Long: **4.25299W**

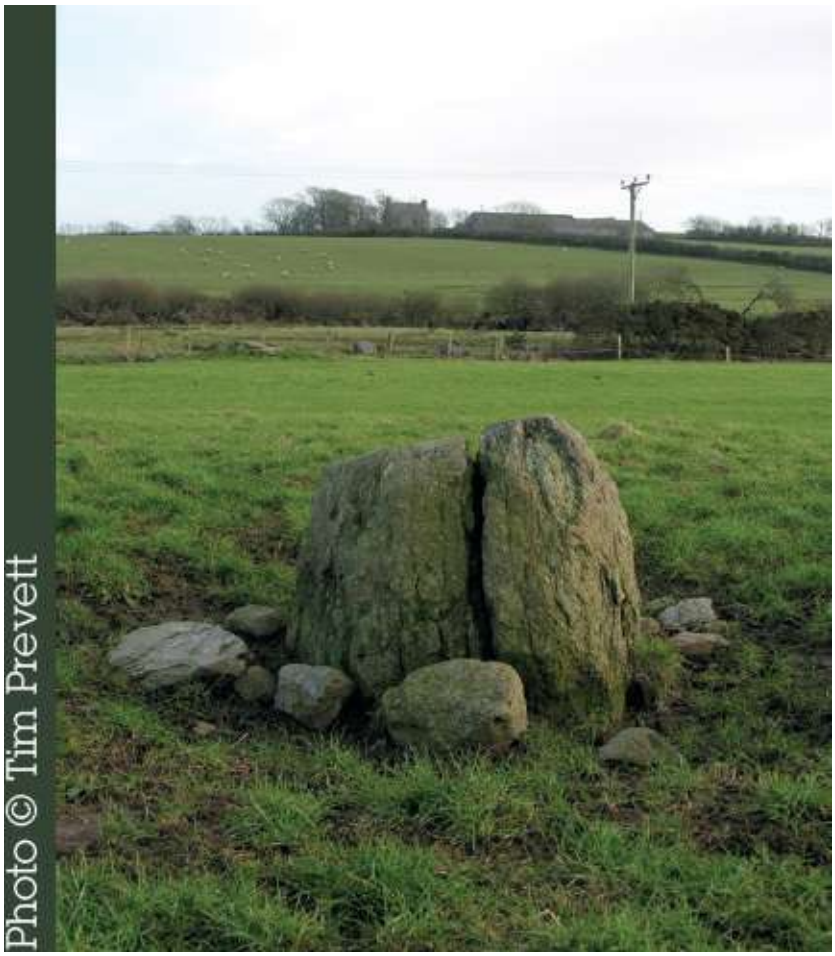
A fantastic site, with an enormous capstone (5.2 × 5.9m/17 × 19ft 8in and 1m/3ft 3in thick, weighing 22 tonnes/25 tons) crouching on eight stones like little legs. Built over a natural hollow in the rock, the chamber would have been about 2m (6½ft) high inside. The remains of about 30 people of all ages were found here, along with pot sherds, flints, animal bones and shells. The final burials may have taken place some 1,000 years after the tomb was constructed.

Photo © Jim Appleton

BEDD BRANWEN

Ring Cairn | Nearest Village: **Elim**
Map: **SH 3610 8500** | Sheets: **E262 L114** | Lat: **53.33644N** | Long: **4.46302W**

The ruined ring cairn has a kerb and a small standing stone, as well as a cist. About 30m (98ft) across and 1m (3ft 3in) high, its name refers to the legend that this is the burial place of Queen Branwen, from the Second Branch of the Mabinogi. In the 1960s several urns and cremation deposits were found, with jet and amber beads.



Nearby | At SH 3192 8632, 4.4km (2¾ miles) west of Bedd Branwen, is the lichenous **Soar** standing stone, also known as Capel Soar, about 3m (10ft) tall. It stands beside a church, just off the road. Within 700m (2,297ft) of this stone, archaeologists investigating a school building site have made the largest-ever Neolithic discovery in Wales, including the ruins of three early Neolithic houses and over 1,500 pottery sherds, lithic artefacts and botanical remains.

Conwy

MAP

GREAT ORME

Ancient Mine | Nearest Town: **Llandudno**
Map: **SH 7708 8310** | Sheets: **OL17 L115** | Lat: **53.33051N** | Long: **3.84543W**

Worked for over 1,000 years, Great Orme in Conwy is the largest Bronze Age copper mine yet discovered in the world. It has been estimated that enough copper was mined here to make more than 10 million bronze axes. There are more than 5km (3 miles) of tunnels, which extend to a depth of 70m (230ft), as well as opencast or surface workings. From March to November (check the website for dates and times), visitors can view a section of the tunnels, and see, in the visitor centre, some of the tools that were discovered there.

Nearby | At SH 7721 8295, 203m (666ft) ESE of Great Orme mine, is **Lletty'r Filiast** ("grave of the greyhound bitch"), a badly damaged but still impressive cairn and chamber overlooking Llandudno Bay. The remains of the cairn are around 10.6m (35ft) wide and 27.4m (90ft) long. The chamber's capstone is broken, with only half still in place. For an unbeatable view of Llandudno, Lletty'r Filiast and the copper mines, try out the cable car (Britain's longest).

LLYN-Y-WRACH

Ring Cairn | Nearest Village: **Capelulo**
Map: **SH 7465 7578** | Sheets: **OL17 L115** | Lat: **53.26415N** | Long: **3.8808W**

A fine ring cairn, about 12m (39ft) in diameter, with a southwest-facing entrance.

“It’s in a good position to watch the sun go down over Foel Lus.”
Christopher Bickerton

DRUIDS’ CIRCLE Alt Name: **Maeni Hirion**

Embanked Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Penmaenmawr**
Map: **SH 7228 7464** | Sheets: **OL17 L115** | Lat: **53.25299N** | Long: **3.91554W**

A long but straightforward walk up across the moors to the headland brings you to this dramatically sited embanked stone circle. The 35m (114ft) diameter circle has a four-stone portal or entrance, with 10 upright stones in the circle itself, one fallen, and the holes for two more. The bank is about 0.6m (2ft) high, and the tallest stones are about 1.8m (5ft 10in). Excavation in 1958 revealed a central cist and various cremation deposits. The most anthropomorphic stone, known as the Deity Stone, resembles a hooded figure – and apparently it has an aversion to swearing. Legend tells that one notorious blasphemer, who one night came to taunt the stone, was found dead at its base the next morning. So watch your language!

Nearby | At SH 7216 7457, 139m (456ft) WSW of the Druids’ Circle, is the romantically named **Monument 280**, which is thought to be the remains of a ring cairn. It’s around 16m (52ft) in diameter, with a stony kerbed bank 2–3m (6½ft–10ft) wide. Excavation in 1959 revealed several cremation deposits here.

At SH 7250 7470, 227m (745ft) east of the Druids’ Circle, is a further ring cairn (often confused with Monument 280), known as **Circle 278**. An intervening small ridge makes it invisible from the Druids’ Circle. It’s about 12m (39ft) in diameter with a 2.4m (8ft) bank of rubble enclosing an open space.

MAEN-Y-BARDD Alt Names: **Cwt-y-bugail, Cwt-y-filiast**

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Rowen**
Map: **SH 7406 7178** | Sheets: **OL17 L115** | Lat: **53.22808N** | Long: **3.88806W**

A wonderful portal tomb, in a beautifully wild location above the village. The name means “bard (or poet’s) stone” (the two alternative names mean

“shepherd’s hut” and “kennel of the greyhound bitch”). The capstone rests on four uprights, enclosing a 1.2m (4ft) high chamber. One legend tells how a giant threw his spear across the valley at his sheepdog, which was sheltering in the chamber; it fell short and stuck in the ground as the nearby Ffon-ycawr. This is another site where spending the night in the chamber is risky: you will arise in the morning either a poet or mad.

Photo © Anna Reynolds

Nearby | At SH 7391 7166, 192m (630ft) WSW of Maen-y-bard, is a standing stone called **Ffony-cawr**(“giant’s staff/stick”), also known as Picell Arthur (“Arthur’s spear”). The angle of this 1.8m (5ft 10in) stone is explained by the story that this is the spear the giant threw at his dog.

HAFODYGORS WEN

Ring Cairn | Nearest Village: **Llanwrst**

Map: **SH 7336 6742** | Sheets: **OL17 L11** | Lat: **53.18874N** | Long:

3.89681W

Generally described as a ring cairn, this interesting site contains four stones set into the circumference of the circle, resembling the four-posters of Scotland and Northumberland.

CAPEL GARMON

Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Capel Garmon**
Map: **SH 8180 5432** | Sheets: **OL18 L116** | Lat: **53.07299N** | Long: **3.76573W**

Despite its location, this tomb is considered a Cotswold-Severn type, due to the trapezoidal cairn, forecourt with horns and false entrance, and a passage of around 4.5m (15ft) leading to two chambers. One massive capstone remains in place. It was excavated in 1924 and has been heavily restored. A right of way leads to the site. In the 19th century, it was reported that the chamber had been used as a stable, complete with window, door and manger, but that these additions were later removed.

Photo © Rob Barnett

Denbighshire

MAP

BRENIG

Timber Circle & Cairn Complex | Nearest Village: **Pentre-llyn-cymmer**
Map: **SH 9834 5720** | Sheets: **E264 L116** | Lat: **53.10227N** | Long: **3.51986W**

There's plenty to see around the Llyn Brenig reservoir in Denbighshire, with archaeological trails leading from the main car park. Monuments include various Bronze Age mortuary and ceremonial sites, forming a cairn cemetery and its surrounding environment. It's unusual to find a landscape of this type so thoroughly investigated, in this case prior to the construction of the reservoir in the 1970s. It was intended to enlarge the reservoir but this never happened, leaving more sites visible.

BRENIG 44

One of the most interesting sites is Brenig 44, an unusual ring cairn at SH 9834 5720, shown during excavation to have featured a circle of stakes. The posts visible today are set in the original post-holes.

BRENIG 51

At SH 9898 5656, 903m (just over ½ mile) ESE of Brenig 44, is Brenig 51, a beautifully reconstructed platform cairn with 26 small stones set in a 7m (23ft) wide ring. Excavation had found the cremated bones of an adult and a child, as well as a bone dagger handle, within this ring. Originally, a wooden post had stood here, but later the space was filled with stones to create a complete platform as seen in the reconstruction.

OTHER SITES

Other recommended sites in the area include: the Brenig 46 cairn at SH 9858

5691; the Brenig 40 round barrow with evidence of possible excarnation platform at SH 9778 5711; the lovely Brenig 8 kerb cairn at SH 9880 5636 and the bouldery round cairn Brenig 47 at SH 9892 5804.

RANAS UCHAF

Chambered Cairn | Nearest Village: **Cynwyd**
Map: **SJ 0112 3752** | Sheets: **E255 L125** | Lat: **52.92595N** | Long: **3.47232W**

The remains of a chambered tomb with some uprights are still there, but there's no sign of the capstone. The mound, which has been reduced by ploughing, is about 1.8m (5ft 10in) high and 22m (72ft) in diameter.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

TYFOS

Cairn Circle | Nearest Village: **Llandrillo**
Map: **SJ 0284 3876** | Sheets: **E255 L125** | Lat: **52.93741N** | Long: **3.44712W**

This denuded cairn or barrow (or possibly the remains of a stone circle to which

a cairn was added) is basically in someone's garden, so do ask for permission; otherwise you can see it from the road. More or less circular, the cairn is about 24m (78ft) across, with an internal ring of kerb stones around 16m (53ft) in diameter, with 13 remaining kerb stones, 0.3–0.6m (1–2ft) tall. Lovely views of the Clwyd range of hills; see if you can pinpoint the site of Moelty-Uchaf (see page 254).

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

MOEL TY-UCHAF

Cairn Circle | Nearest Village: **Llandrillo**
Map: SJ 0561 3717 | Sheets: **E255 L125** | Lat: **52.92361N** | Long: **3.40545W**

A truly lovely cairn circle in a wonderful location, with 41 stones, all about 0.5m (1½ft) tall, in a *c*. 12m (39ft) ring. There is a central cist, an outlier to the NNE and great views (the Tyfos cairn circle is visible from here). Downhill, south of

the circle, is a raised, circular platform cairn, around 16m (52ft) in diameter. The area is also known for a strange incident in 1974 (the “Welsh Roswell”), when residents of Llandrillo witnessed strange lights and a huge explosion that have never been fully explained. UFO enthusiasts insisted that the government was covering up the crash landing of an extraterrestrial spacecraft in the Berwyn Mountains.

Photo © David Chaika

TYN-Y-COED

Chambered Cairn | Nearest Village: **Rhydyglafes**
Map: **SJ 0477 3960** | Sheets: **E255 L125** | Lat: **52.94533N** | Long: **3.41869W**

This badly damaged tomb, thought to have originally had a circular cairn about 46m (151ft) in diameter, comprises a mutilated cairn some 4m (13ft) high, with a chamber and a very large capstone, about 3m (10ft) long. The capstone is propped up at one end, and the western end is engulfed by the remains of the cairn, which means there’s not much chance of accessing the chamber.

Photo © Tim Prevett

OWAIN GLYNDWR'S HOUSE

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Glyndyfrdwy**
Map: **SJ 1275 4309** | Sheets: **E255 L125** | Lat: **52.97802N** | Long: **3.30087W**

A nicely cup-marked stone, just to the east of a mound associated with the Welsh political hero Owain Glyndwr. The mound is all that remains of a 12th-century castle.

PILLAR OF ELISEG Alt Name: LLantysilio-yn-lâl

Bronze Age Burial Mound & 9th-century Cross-shaft | Nearest Town: **Llangollen**

Map: **SJ 2026 4452** | Sheets: **E256 L117** | Lat: **52.99205N** | Long: **3.18941W**

The cross-shaft (now lacking its head) was erected in the 9th century by the last king of Powys; it is set on a square base that stands on a prehistoric burial mound. Investigation in 2010–12 demonstrated that the mound is a Bronze Age kerbed cairn with at least three secondary cists, one of which was undisturbed. The cremated remains of multiple individuals were found here.

Flintshire

MAP

PENYCLODDIAU

Hill Fort & Cairn | Nearest Village: **Nannerch**
Map: **SJ 1290 6761** | Sheets: **E265 L116** | Lat: **53.1984N** | Long: **3.30529W**

A massive hill fort, staggering in its size, and yet only one out of a chain of six running down through North Wales. The hill fort is Iron Age but recent investigations have confirmed the cairn as Bronze Age. The hill fort covers some 21ha (51 acres), mostly enclosed by a single bank or rampart, which in places is formed entirely of stone. To the north, where the lie of the land is less naturally defendable, there are four ramparts. There are multiple hut circles in the interior, but these are hard to see in the undergrowth. The cairn, at the north end of the fort, is 2m (6½ft) in diameter and 0.7m (2ft 3in) high. It was restored in 2010, having been disturbed by the erection of a trig point (since removed) and a walkers' cairn. Excavation revealed a "robbers' trench" where the burial should have been.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

Nearby | At SJ 1453 6604, 2.3km (almost 1½ miles) ESE of Penycloddiau, is the smaller **Moel Arthur** hill fort, with some of the largest ramparts in the area. The walkers' cairn in the centre may stand on a Bronze Age barrow, and three Bronze Age copper flat axes were found after a severe storm in 1962.

GOP-Y-GOLEUNI Alt Name: **The Gop Cairn**

Cairn | Nearest Village: **Trelawnyd**

Map: **SJ 0866 8017** | Sheets: **E265 L116** | Lat: **53.31056N** | Long: **3.37235W**

The largest prehistoric manmade hill in Britain and Ireland after Silbury Hill (see page 108) and Merlin's Mount (see page 112), this mostly turf-covered cairn offers tremendous panoramic views. It's enormous – about 12m (39ft) high and around 90 × 73m (300 × 240ft) in diameter. Excavations in 1886–7 found no passage or chambers, just animal bones. It dates to 4000–3000BC. Immediately below the cairn is a cave, perhaps functioning as a burial chamber, as the remains of 14 people were found here, along with flints and pottery.

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